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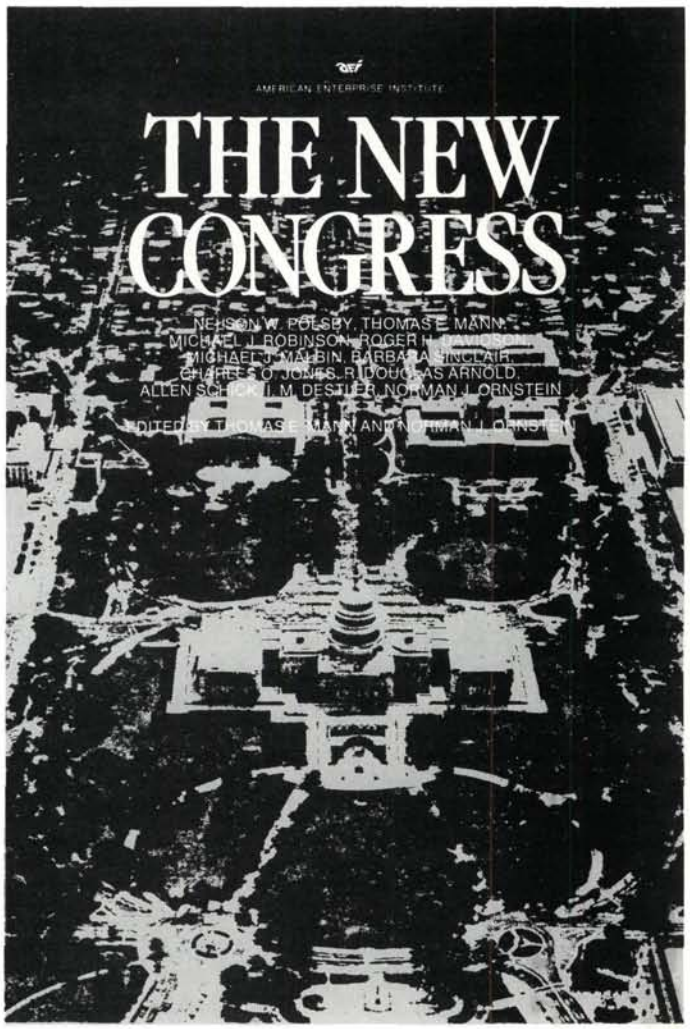
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TRB

from Washington
May 30, 1981

Progress Report

At this critical juncture in Ronald Reagan's incumbency, let's look at James Jones. This slender, quiet, undistinguished-looking Democrat from oil-rich Oklahoma represents the mixed-up character of American politics just when Reagan is emerging from his honeymoon period. Meeting Jim Jones the first time you think he has a case of terminal mildness. You have to know him better and understand his skill at taxes, and at putting together political coalitions, to gauge his power. This is a confusing time and Jones confuses a lot of people. The liberal National Committee for an Effective Congress is considering a campaign to defeat him next year. So is Common Cause, another left-of-center group that notes that Jones got $130,450 from political action committees, 88 percent of which came from business interests, notably oil companies. OK, he's obviously a spokesman for the interests. But wait a moment. The National Conservative Political Action Committee also has designated Representative Jones for defeat. (See "NCPAC Lays an Egg," by Paul J. Cleary, *TNR*, May 23.)

The nation found out about Jones when it found out about another budget precocity, David Stockman. Thirty-four-year-old Stockman is Reagan's whiz kid; 41-year-old Jones is chairman of the Democratic House Budget Committee. (At 25 Jim Jones joined the LBJ administration and later became the youngest White House chief of staff in history.) Stockman rushed together the successful Reagan budget; Jones rushed together the unsuccessful House alternative that got licked on the House floor on April 28 with the help of 63 turncoat Democrats. The Republican budget proposed a $31.4 billion deficit; the Democratic alternative, $24.8 billion.

Jim Jones is a fiscal conservative but there are other things to be said. "This Congress," he told a constituent audience out in Tulsa, the oil capital, "will fundamentally change federal fiscal policy in a manner that has not occurred in the past 50 years." He is probably right. Anybody can see that the Social Security system must be revised; if not, it will go broke in two years. Anybody (or almost anybody) can see that the country must get spending under control. The issue in Congress is not whether we will cut spending but where the cuts will fall—on the affluent or the disadvantaged—and where we go from there.

You probably will hear a lot more about Jim Jones. He rides a bike; jogs; has two sons, eight and ten; and there's a sign on his desk that says, "The Buck Slows Down Here." Anybody who worked for LBJ must be ambitious, and Jones is aware that another Oklahoman, Carl Albert, became Speaker of the House. Last week he was asked, how about Reagan? Well, he replied thoughtfully, the people yearn for a "strong" president—they always do. Now the crucial time begins; the Reagan honeymoon is running out and the president must begin to spend his political capital. Will the story of the past 20 years repeat itself—the cycle of declining presidential prestige as the public unhappily finds out that the chief executive somehow doesn't have the power it supposed? Nobody knows. That's what we must watch for now.

* * *

Reagan's hard-line nominees to cabinet and sub-cabinet posts are a commentary on his philosophy. Here is a review of some of them:

Secretary of Education Terrel Bell. Named to a post Reagan wants abolished. He favors tax credits for private school students, presaging a church-state row. He favors transfer to states of main responsibility for desegregating public schools and colleges. He is an activist who fears "a federal ministry of education, like they have in Europe."

Interior Secretary James Watt. Would halt park land acquisition. Would abolish the Land & Water Conservation Fund. Before his appointment he was a professional confrontationist against environmentalists; heading the Mountain States Legal Foundation, a so-called public interest law firm in Denver.

Lieutenant General Edward L. Rowny. Acting special representative for arms control and disarmament negotiations. He was on the team that negotiated SALT II and retired from the service to campaign against it. Incidentally, the US and Soviets are scheduled to resume discussions in Geneva on May 27.

Warren Richardson was named to the Department of Health and Human Services but withdrew. He was a lobbyist for Liberty Lobby, an organization tinged with anti-Semitism.

John B. Crowell Jr. Named to head the Natural Resources and Environment section of the Department of Agriculture. He would let lumber companies into federal forests. As a private citizen he was associated with companies seeking such exploitation.

Ernest W. Lefever. Picked to be assistant secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. Testimony indicates he agrees with Secretary Haig that protecting human rights in communist dictatorships is fine; protesting violations in friendly "authoritarian" states is questionable. (See "Lefeverish Activity," by Howard Stanislawski, page 12.)

* * *

Jimmy Carter, we understand, is starting to break his silence. There's a historical up-cycle in the fortunes of ex-presidents, just as there is a curious down-cycle for presidents. Those who pooh-pooh Carter may find him, I think, an eloquent voice. His farewell address on January 14 got almost no attention but was a powerful statement: "Each generation must renew its foundations. . . . For this generation life is nuclear survival; liberty is human rights; the pursuit of happiness is a planet whose resources are devoted to the physical and spiritual nourishment of its inhabitants. . . ."

He resumed the theme in New York on May 17, the day Reagan spoke at Notre Dame. Carter said he advocated increased defense funds but added, "This should not lead us to close the door to further negotiations." He reminded the New York Board of Rabbis that his administration spoke out against human rights violations. The struggle must go on: "Above all, we dare not be silent."

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Correspondence

Coffin's selective compassion

To the editors:
Regarding "Missionaries Impossible" by Eric Breindel (*TNR*, May 2): on May 12, 1980, a letter was sent to the Reverend William Sloane Coffin pleading that he speak out against the terrible decimation of the Kurdish people in Iran. It concluded: "Most sadly, those on whom we small people depend to come forward during moral crises and to set an example for those of us who are greater in number, but slightly less robust, have been selective in their indignation. By that selectivity, they are compromised and so are we." The response from the reverend who indicted Americans for failing to hear the sounds of "tortured Iranians": silence. In his fervor to sympathize with Iranians tortured by the regime of the shah he failed to recognize that the new regime had become the torturer of Kurds, Arabs, Baluchis, Azerbaijanis, Bahais. Neither Reverend Coffin nor any of the visiting clerics spoke out on their behalf.

Vera Beaudin Saeedpour
Director, The Kurdish Program
Cultural Survival, Inc.
Cambridge, Massachusetts

John Osborne

To the editors:
Of all those in the press corps who covered the White House during the Carter administration, none surpassed John Osborne in objectivity, fairness, accuracy, probity, and honesty. He set the standard for the White House press corps. He maintained confidences and sources. He represented the best in independent, able journalism and in addition was a gentleman in the finest sense.

His death is a great loss to the magazine he served so well, to those in the White House he covered so ably, and to the nation he so magnificently kept informed.

Stuart E. Eizenstat
Former Assistant to President Carter
for Domestic Affairs and Policy
Washington, DC

To the editors:
I was very sorry to hear of John Osborne's death. Although I had met him only once, I thought the short tribute in the May 16 issue of *TNR* caught the man as he was known to regular readers like me. There was really nowhere else to find coverage like his of the White House. Each week I would look forward to reading White House Watch. What a model and what a loss.

Edmund Fawcett
Washington Correspondent
The Economist
Washington, DC

To the editors:
I was deeply saddened and felt as if I had lost a friend upon learning of the passing of John Osborne.

I had admired him as a journalist with a uniqueness in his insight, sources, and perspective. Behind every report, policy, or new program there was a story needing clarification and amplification. Osborne always had that inside story.

With his passing, my understanding of presidential decision-making, policy development, and personalities who occupy that office will be less clear. We not only lost a great journalist, we have lost the knowledge of where any administration is taking us. We are all poorer.

Thomas J. Searson
Glendale, California

Which Welch?

To the editors:
Forgive me. In a recent appreciation of the late Reuben Maury, the longtime editorial page editor of the *New York Daily News* ("Squib King Writes Finis," *TNR*, May 9), I confused Robert Welch with Joseph Welch. I meant Joseph. Robert is the founder of the John Birch Society and Joseph was the lawyer for the Army side in the Army-McCarthy hearings. A worse mistake is hardly possible.

Richard Cohen
Washington, DC

Nuclear war warnings

To the editors:
Morton Kondracke should be congratulated for the accuracy he achieved in quoting me on the danger of nuclear war in Europe ("Nuclear Innocents Abroad," *TNR*, May 9). But his other characterizations of my comments are not based on fact. The Pentagon is planning for nuclear war, training its troops for nuclear war, and arming for nuclear war. Anyone who believes we are not planning, training, and arming to fight a nuclear war probably still believes in the tooth fairy.

Of course we all hope our forces deter war with the Soviet Union. But any war the military plans to fight, it plans to win. The Joint Chiefs of Staff would be court-martialed if they planned to fight to lose or even to come out even. Unfortunately, there won't be any winners in a nuclear war. Once war begins, US doctrine calls for limited nuclear war in Europe. US military planners have detailed the numbers and types of nuclear weapons to be used there. However, we will be only one of four nuclear powers fighting in Europe, and hence unable to control a nuclear war once it starts. Kondracke should take a few minutes out and read the US Army Field Manual 100-5, particularly the sections on how the US Army will make offensive and defensive use of nuclear weapons in Europe.

On the matter of "isolationism," involvement in foreign countries by the US should be to build and protect our allies, and not to destroy them in the process of "saving" them. Over a period of years some of the 330,000 US troops in Europe should be reduced and, one hopes, all brought home. When we formed NATO and sent troops to Europe it was, as President Eisenhower said, "a temporary measure." Permanent garrisons of large numbers of US troops in foreign countries is neither good for our Army nor good for the host country.

We are the most powerful country in the world by any criteria, but we don't run it. We are five percent of the world's population and one of 160 nations. My perspective suggests that war is a stupid way to settle international difficulties, and nuclear war borders on insanity.

Gene R. La Rocque
Director, Center for Defense Information
Washington, DC

The editors welcome correspondence from *TNR*'s readers. Letters intended for publication should include the correspondent's full name, address, and telephone number, should be typed double-spaced, and held to under 200 words. Longer letters may be abridged due to lack of space.

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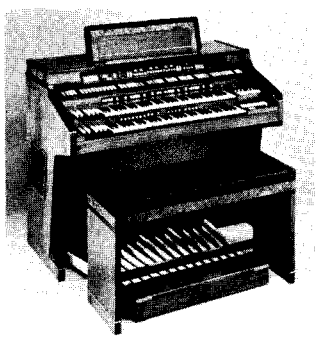

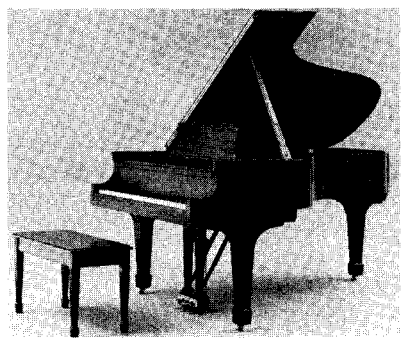

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

May 30, 1981

Grow Up, Japan

Tremors are jolting US-Japanese relations again. So far they are much less severe than the Nixon shocks of the 1970s, America's defeat in Vietnam, and Jimmy Carter's proposal to withdraw US forces from Korea. But they are unsettling enough. Japan's foreign minister has resigned, the press is in an uproar, and the opposition is shaking its fist at the ruling establishment. There is some talk that the government of Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki may fall.

The precipitating events seem trivial in some cases, understandable (but dismissable) in others. The worst of them was the sinking of a Japanese freighter by a US submarine last month, killing two sailors in what amounted to a hit-and-dive accident in the South China Sea. This was followed by the destruction of $400,000 worth of fishermen's nets by US Navy ships during maneuvers.

Accidents happen, however, and the submarine flap had largely died down by the time Prime Minister Suzuki visited the US earlier this month. It was a Japanese foul-up over the joint US-Japanese communiqué about his visit that has caused the ground to rumble. Innocently enough, the communiqué referred to "the alliance between Japan and the United States . . . built upon their shared values of democracy" and called for "an appropriate division of [defense] roles between Japan and the United States." The Japanese press seized upon the word "alliance" to charge that Suzuki had caved in to pressure from President Reagan for a major increase in Japanese defense spending.

Instead of facing the issue squarely by reminding his fellow citizens that the US and Japan have had a mutual security treaty since 1960 and, possibly, by quoting to them the latest figures on growing Soviet strength in the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean, Suzuki panicked. He blamed his foreign ministry for mishandling release of the communiqué (though he, in fact, had cleared it himself), and foreign minister Ito resigned. Now Suzuki's own weakness as a leader is under criticism. No one quite knows whether the storm will blow over or take Suzuki's government with it.

On top of this, the whole Japanese governing establishment has been shaken by former US ambassador Edwin O. Reischauer's disclosure in a newspaper interview that for 20 years US warships have routinely sailed through Japanese waters and docked at its ports carrying nuclear weapons. As Reischauer said, this was "common knowledge" among Japanese leaders, but both the Japanese and the US have been maintaining the fiction that the US ships mysteriously offloaded their nuclear cargo before arriving in Japan. This is not the first time that the truth has been exposed, but the Japanese papers still feel obligated to make it into a national scandal, and opposition parties are only too happy to accuse the ruling Liberal Democrats of lying.

No one expects the latest shocks to upset seriously the fundamentally strong and stable US-Japanese relationship, but like seismic tremors studied by earth scientists, they indicate that a fundamental shift is taking place beneath the surface—and they could foretell a major blowup. Japan is being pressured by events, by the United States, and by its own phenomenal economic success to cease being America's ward and begin taking its place among the world's grownups.

The United States, Japan's indulgent Daddy, has a right to feel used. Under American protection Japan has grown to be one of the richest countries in the world, with a per capita GNP likely soon to pass our own. It became rich and continues to prosper while spending less than one percent of its GNP on defense, while the United States has been spending six percent. One prominent economist estimates that if Japan had been bearing the same burden as the US over the past decade, its GNP would be 30 percent lower than it is.

Japanese sensibilities are still so tender that American presidents hesitate to lecture Japan's leaders publicly about their responsibilities. Reportedly our officials do not even brace the Japanese with demands that

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they meet such-and-such a defense spending goal in terms of percentages of GNP. Instead, they point out that certain defense tasks need to be performed, and they urge Japan to share the load. The Japanese pattern has been to take on the tasks verbally, but to purchase far less than the amount of planes, ships, and ammunition necessary to do the job.

Japan's performance clearly has been inadequate. At the rate Japan is going, it will be 1990 before it reaches even a full one percent of GNP for defense, if then. Meanwhile, it gives away almost as little of its wealth in economic assistance to needy nations as we do and far less than most other industrialized nations. Japan uses the money it saves to invest in modern technology.

We do not begrudge the Japanese their propensity to save, invest, and produce, but we do resent their unwillingness to defend themselves or (if that is too painful a task) to help feed the world's hungry. More and more Americans share the resentment. This manifests itself in destructive ways, notably in clamor for trade restrictions that would damage the economies of both countries. But Japan, if it is wise, will look upon rising protectionist feeling as a kind of seismic warning from this side of the Pacific. We urge the Japanese to come to terms with their responsibilities and stop the ground from shaking.

Will Widows Be Next?

Social legislation is rarely both humane and thrifty, but the Child Welfare and Adoption Assistance Act of 1980, which Congress may scuttle, was an exception. Under this law, subsidies are given to families who adopt children. This is good for the states because it helps reduce expenses for state-run foster homes. It is good for the families because it eases the financial burden of adoption, especially the burden of adopting a child with medical or psychological disabilities. And obviously it is good for orphans.

But the administration has persuaded the Senate Finance Committee to combine funds for this program with other social service funds in a block grant that reduces the total by 25 percent. According to a May 19 letter to the *New York Times* from Senate Finance Committee chairman Bob Dole, the block grant proposal stipulates that any state that reduces adoption assistance by more than 25 percent will lose federal money. But because the program no longer would be an entitlement program, but rather a series of "appropriated entitlements," it is now less likely that adoption assistance subsidies will increase to meet the real needs of families who adopt children. And most states likely will make the 25 percent reduction that the new law allows. As Daniel P. Moynihan, Democrat of New York, told his fellow senators on the Finance Committee before it voted to approve the block grant, "We are going to put these children in competition with the social welfare professionals and the administrators and the bureaucracies. . . . These children will lose out in the process."

Budget-cutting through block grants is shrewd policy. Senators and representatives don't want to seem like Dickensian villains, so nearly all of them voted for the Child Welfare and Adoption Assistance Act last year. How, then, could they turn around and reduce the ten million dollars that had been allocated for adoption assistance? By incorporating that money into a block grant and cutting 25 percent—it's up to the states to decide *which* 25 percent—from the total. A senator who voted to put adoption assistance into a block grant may now comfortably argue that the states should maintain payments to orphans at the expense of "welfare cheaters." The problem with this argument is that welfare cheaters do not obligingly separate themselves out from non-cheaters. They have to be found, which takes time and money. In the meantime, orphans will pay the price.

Cutting off adoption subsidies isn't just cruel; it's expensive. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the incentives for adoption provided in the Child Welfare and Adoption Assistance Act would reduce administrative costs for foster care by four billion dollars over five years. That may be optimistic, but many states with similar programs have brought these costs down significantly. In Oregon, for instance, subsidies to families of 509 children saved the state one million dollars in room and board over a period of three years. According to the North American Committee on Adoptable Children, the average cost per child per year in foster care is half that of the cost per child per year in institutional care. We all agree that family life is better than life in an orphange. What the representatives and senators who settle this question in House-Senate conference next month should know is that it is also cheaper.

Motherhood, Too

Orphans weren't the only little folks who fell through the Reagan administration's safety net last week. So did suckling babes in arms. The occasion was a vote in the World Health Organization on a voluntary "marketing code" to restrict the promotion of infant formula as a substitute for breast-feeding. The US was the only country to vote no on the substance of the issue. Our delegate acted on direct orders from the White House, which had overruled the departments of State and of Health and Human Services.

During the long controversy over infant formula, activists who should know better have accused the formula manufacturers of being "baby killers," an epithet whose use is a reliable sign that reason has

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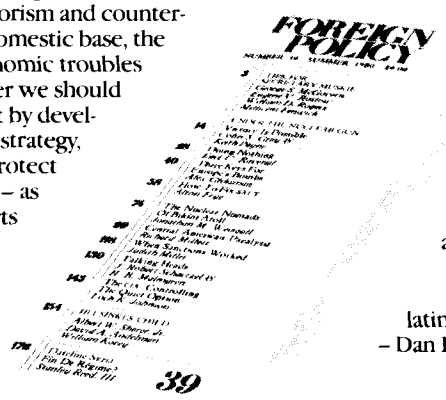

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been abandoned. Still, the code makes sense. It is designed for third world countries, which lack the medical infrastructure, high literacy, clean water, and consumer sophistication that can make formula almost as safe and healthy as mother's milk. The formula manufacturers have a history of taking advantage of their customers, even sending salespeople dressed as nurses around to maternity wards to convince third world moms that feeding their babies formula instead of breast milk is scientific and up to date. The best up-to-date scientific belief, of course, is just the opposite.

The dreary task of defending the administration's vote on what was literally a "motherhood issue" fell to Elliott Abrams, assistant secretary of State for international organization affairs. "The code," Abrams wrote in the *Washington Post* last week, "interferes with the role of health professionals in dealing with their patients by assigning to government—not doctors—the central role in informing families about infant feeding." Homilies about the sanctity of the doctor-patient relationship are a bit beside the point in much of the third world, where doctors are about as common as Princess phones. The WHO code, by urging formula manufacturers to market their product through health professionals rather than directly to mothers, actually strengthens the doctor-patient relationship where it exists to be strengthened. As for the dangers of big government telling families how to take care of their children, Abrams notes approvingly elsewhere in the same article that "the United States spends millions of dollars each year promoting breast-feeding as the best way to feed infants."

Abrams ends up arguing by analogy. He tries to borrow a bit of luster for the formula vote by lumping it with America's lonely support of Israel and its almost as lonely opposition to UNESCO's attempt to turn the press into a tame parrot by imposing a "New World Information Order." But the analogy fails. The mere fact that everyone else in the world disagrees with us doesn't prove that we're right. The issues aren't the same, and to argue that they are is to devalue the ones that really do involve important matters of principle.

Stars on the stump.

Lecture Circus

It is billed as "the most brilliant meeting our national capital has seen in this century," and that's not all. "It will be the most talked of and famous convention of the year anywhere and will be held as usual (August 3-7) in America's most interesting and exciting city." There's more. "It will supply you with conversation pieces for the rest of your life." Best of all, it will be "a bonanza for those who like to take pictures of themselves with famous people." This stupendous meeting is the annual convention of the International Platform Association, the professional organization of the American lecture platform. It will feature many hours of lectures by famous people who have discovered the rewards of speechifying in their spare time, and who will go on to grace lesser meetings throughout the year all over the country. To hear the IPA tell it, these eminences are just as unabashedly thrilled as their awed audiences about their lecturing avocation; the convention "is the year's high point for even the leading figures who attend."

You might gather from the IPA's unsophisticated Barnum & Bailey-style pitch that there has been a renaissance of the old summer Chautauqua week with its "culture under canvas" on Main Street, USA. There has indeed been a renaissance in the lecturing business, but the IPA's style hasn't quite kept up with that of the trade it has represented for 150 years—since the days when Ralph Waldo Emerson was paid five dollars (and oats for his horse) to lecture at New England lyceums, through the years when the Chautauquas brought summer excitement in brown tents to small-town America. That trade has boomed in the last 15 years or so, thanks largely to the growing power of TV to create celebrities in all walks of life. Now prominent "insiders" in American life who lecture on appropriately prominent topics in their free time have eclipsed the professional speakers who mostly offered inspirational thought and homespun humor.

For one wondrous example of the grand new scale of public speaking, Alexander Haig parlayed his renowned lack of eloquence into a record half-million dollars in three and a half months on the lecture circuit when he returned from Europe. "Monster speakers," as the five-figure talkers are called by some in the business, come to the platform from all eminent stations in life—mostly in politics and the media—to add to their wealth and fame (or infamy). The lecture bureaus that manage their engagements say the demand for this high-priced gas keeps going up, outrunning even the ever-growing supply. G. Gordon Liddy gets booked for three to four speeches a week at $3,000 apiece. Rumor has it that NBC's Jessica Savitch sometimes gets 500 invitations to speak in one month, for four-digit fees that would make anyone's eyes gleam.

But the stars' eyes gleam discreetly. It's hard to imagine the likes of Haig, Henry Kissinger, the Fords, Barbara Walters—to mention a few of the "monsters"—sharing the IPA's breathless excitement about its convention or about the trade it represents. Along with their spectacularly high fees, these prestigious speakers have introduced a high tone of seriousness and polish to the avocation of lecturing. Unlike the IPA, the leading lecture bureaus treat their prominent clients with dignity befitting their status in the real world. They are figures in demand for their important thoughts on important subjects, not mere celebrities peddling their images on the lecture circuit.

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Among scores of lecture bureaus throughout the country, two large operations on the east coast pioneered and still dominate in the expanding field. Harry Walker, Inc., perched on the 36th floor of the Empire State Building, claims to be "the nation's foremost speakers bureau," and few contest that. The American Program Bureau, run by Harry Walker's nephew Robert, sprawls in a suburban office near Boston and boasts of being rated the largest bureau by the *Guinness Book of World Records*. The Walkers, who began in the modest but busy business of providing speakers and flowers to garden clubs and community gatherings, take credit for being among the first to woo public figures to the platform. They represent the lecturers through a contractual arrangement known as a "listing." Speakers pay a 10-30 percent commission to one or more bureaus to act as their agent, which entails advertising their availability and appeal, and then arranging their appearances. (When a speaker deals through only one bureau, it's called an "exclusive," naturally every bureau's dream.) The Walker bureaus also say they played a role in developing the two major audiences that, in combination with the celebrity speakers, have contributed to the boom in the business: college campuses, and corporations and trade associations. Both bureaus have enjoyed multi-million-dollar bookings annually for more than a decade; Harry Walker, Inc., emphasizes the corporate market, APB the campus audience.

APB STARTED out and quickly soared in the middle of the 1960s by bringing controversial radical and minority figures such as Mark Rudd, Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, and Dick Gregory to colleges around the country. Though now the ranks of the radicals have thinned and campus life has calmed, black history month is still "hell month around APB," says the bureau's spokesman. Three of APB's most popular speakers, familiar from its early days, have managed to weather a decade of fads: Ralph Nader, Julian Bond, and Dick Gregory. They're unusual because their popularity no longer depends on escalating media stature. APB says Nader gets booked because "he doesn't get stale." For $4,000 he always has a new cause to push; his tireless talking is said to have earned him $800,000 in a year, which he spends on his crusade. Gregory always has new causes, too. Often they're absurd, such as his recent notion that the murdered children in Atlanta had been kidnaped by the Center for Disease Control for experiments (see Washington Diarist, *TNR*, February 28). He sometimes gives two speeches a day. In his case, however, it's a buyer's, not a seller's, market; Gregory keeps his price low (around $1,500) to secure an audience for what he considers his crucial human rights messages.

But students by and large don't want social messages these days, even when those messages are more reasonable than Gregory's. They would rather hear about "Guerrilla Tactics in the Job Market" than about strategies for revolution. Or they like entertainment —perhaps Maria Von Trapp on "The True Story of *The Sound of Music*" ($1,500), or Olivia de Havilland on "From the City of Stars to the City of Light" ($2,500). Or a visit from Muskie or another eminence from the public world. Unfortunately most lecture series with moderate budgets of around $20,000 can't afford such celebrities on a regular basis, unless they pool funds with other campus groups or are treated by the celebrities to a special college rate in the $5,000 range.

By contrast, corporation and trade associations profess more concern about broad cultural, social, and political subjects, and price is no object when they're planning speakers for their conventions. Harry Walker's listings look like a shadow cabinet, a slightly understaffed NBC, CBS, and ABC newsroom, and a model Congress, with an array of unaffiliated celebrities, economists, artists, and athletes thrown in. When President Carter dumped four members of his cabinet in the summer of 1979, Walker took them in. Now that the voters have ousted Carter and his entourage, Walker has asked them to join his list. Most have succumbed to one or another bureau's blandishments (Don Walker, Harry Walker's son and partner, claims they have to "twist arms" to get public figures to open their mouths for money). Carter, however, is reserving his words for an audience of one, his VDT. He'd make $15,000 to $20,000 per speech, the experts estimate. That's the same range the more prominent on Walker's list receive for less than an hour of talk and assorted sociable gestures such as answering questions, milling, shaking hands. Senator Paul Laxalt and Representative Jack Kemp, the two congressmen who're now on the "most popular" page in Walker's brochure, must be envious. Like all government employees, they are prohibited by federal statute from charging more than $2,000 a speech or making more than $25,000 a year. Among federal officials, only the former hostages of Iran are exempt from the limit.

WHAT WORDS of wisdom does all this gold buy? Not many, according to a popular book in the business, *Finding the Right Speaker*: "A speaker's job is to persuade the audience to accept the information that is being offered. But be careful. It is only easy to persuade those who are already persuaded. People hear what they want to hear. They believe what they want to believe. If you can give someone in every audience half of an idea or help reinforce an idea they already have, you've had a great night." The audience's capacities aside, public figures rarely utter words that haven't been aired elsewhere. "Updating" lecture material is a gesture few speakers condescend to make; repetition is the rule. Topics are generally broad and not too kinky. One currently popular subject seems to be a sweeping survey of the decade called something like "the challenge of the 1980s." That should be good at least through 1984, particularly for "generalists."

But special expertise is also a prime selling point.

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Without much boning up, a speaker can hold forth on the state of his or her profession. The state of an ethnic background or gender will also sell, if the lecturer is neither white nor male. Gerald Ford's oft-repeated themes, according to *Fortune* magazine, have been: "foreign policy," "the current political scene," and "challenges facing America." Shirley Chisholm speaks on "women in politics," "black women in America," and "women and work."

Sometimes speeches, or at least light asides, are specially tailored to the audience. Bruce Laingen recently wearied a gathering of retired diplomats with tales more about life on the lecture circuit than about life as a hostage, but then treated them to a joke about an elderly streaker in a retirement home whose costume was in need of ironing. But more often the audience is supposed to glimpse new perspectives. Panel discussions and debates are now a popular way of broadening listeners' horizons—and lessening speakers' preparation time. Martin Agronsky & Co. can be rented out to expostulate extemporaneously (though beware, the IPA reports that Agronsky can be "a bit gruff in responding to some questions"). APB will match up a right-winger and a left-winger to debate "The New Right: a Problem . . . or a Solution?" Unifying themes are also popular. This year LTV, a large Texas conglomerate, treated the top executives of its five subsidiary companies to a seminar on "The Pursuit of Excellence," at which a conductor, an actress, a novelist, an architect, an artist, a choreographer, a biographer, a philosopher, a scientist, and a football player shared their thoughts with 20 businessmen.

It's not hard to understand why speakers like to speak. Fame and fortune draw today's lecturers just as they did in the early days of the business. Back then, Oliver Wendell Holmes confessed that "a lecturer is a literary strumpet, subject for a greater than whore's fee to prostitute himself." A current senator was heard to explain the avocation this way: "In England when you're voted out of office they make you a member of the House of Lords. Here they send you to Harry Walker and he makes you a millionaire." The appeal of listening to all this expensive talk is what is more mysterious in our media age than it ever was before. The purpose of the lyceums in the early decades of the 19th century was the practical education and the moral motivation of rambunctious young men. The aim of the Chautauqua movement was to offer Main Street its summer smattering of new ideas and a taste of novel entertainments, as well as a glimpse of a few stars and a dose of motivational homilies. If you believe those who package the new breed of important speakers, lectures still serve the best of the old purposes: they're educational and culturally broadening. But in fact we hardly depend on spoken words delivered in person for our edification these days. In any case, 45 minutes certainly isn't enough time to convey crucial knowledge or to raise corporate cultural consciousnesses.

The real reason for the appeal of lecturing these days is also old-fashioned, but not quite so elevated. The lectures still serve the inspirational, motivational function that has been a large part of their purpose all along. Dr. Russell Conwell delivered the same uplifting oration, "Acres of Diamonds"—all about finding the jewels in your own backyard—for 30 years to rapt audiences on the Chautauqua circuit. What better way to discover something glittering on your own terrain than to invite a star from an ever-expanding cast to hold forth there? As the planner of LTV's excellence seminar explained, the executives of his company derived an "internal feeling of self-pride" from seeing that Anthony Burgess, Mstislav Rostropovich, James D. Watson, Fran Tarkenton, Colleen Dewhurst, Justin Kaplan, Tom Wolfe, et al. were willing to devote their time to come talk, shake hands, have coffee with the likes of them. Sociologist Erving Goffman explains the phenomenon more abstractly in his new book, *Forms of Talk*. The platform is a ritual that affords

> supplicants preferential contact with an entity held to be of value. May I add that in thus gaining access to an authority, the audience also gains ritual access to the subject matter over which the speaker has command. (Substantive access is quite another matter.) . . . It is thus that a very heterogeneous band of the famed and ill-famed serve to vivify what is or has recently been noteworthy, each celebrity touching audiences with what he or she has been touched by, each selling association.

When the exchange ends, the seller departs for another platform, his or her image shinier from its recent display. The buyers return to their business or their studies, basking in the glow of second-hand prestige.

Thus the IPA's bedazzled tone about its business is the right one—a little embarrassing maybe, but honest. When the enchanting (and valuable) lecture ritual is all too quickly over, relics remain, the IPA reminds us: those illustrious photographs and the "conversation pieces" to add a little brightness to "the rest of your life."

Ann Hulbert

A Helmsman for human rights.

Lefeverish Activity

"We are the friends of liberty everywhere, but the custodians only of our own." John Quincy Adams coined this maxim over 150 years ago, when the United States had no responsibility for international leadership. Today Ernest Lefever offers it as his philosophical premise in seeking Senate confirmation as assistant secretary of State for Human Rights and

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Humanitarian Affairs. Lefever's rigidly non-interventionist—even quietist—orientation, coupled with his determination to refrain from criticizing the governments of right-wing authoritarian states such as Argentina and El Salvador, has generated a major political controversy. Liberal groups have mobilized to prevent Lefever's confirmation. In private conversations with Senator Charles Percy and other members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Lefever reportedly outraged Percy by stating that the groups and individuals opposed to his nomination were "communist-inspired."

ERNEST LEFEVER is a graduate of the Yale Divinity School and the National Council of Churches' Department of International Justice and Good Will. An ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren, he was a pacifist during World War II. He abandoned his pacifism in the 1940s and accepted the concept of "just war" along with fervent anti-communism. He briefly worked as a foreign policy aide to Hubert Humphrey in 1959-60, and for more than a decade was a fellow of the Brookings Institution. In 1976 Lefever founded the Ethics and Public Policy Center, which, prior to becoming fully independent in 1979, was affiliated with Georgetown University.

On May 18, three months after his nomination was announced, Ernest Lefever appeared at confirmation hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Lefever was asked to respond to numerous criticisms of his record on human rights, which indicates an unequivocal opposition to an activist American role. He underscored his "non-interventionist" position by citing again his old favorite, John Quincy Adams: "[America] does not go around in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own." Until the late hours of his testimony, Lefever refused to reveal, even in private to members of the Foreign Relations Committee, the names of contributors to his center. He finally relented, and the senators, so far, have found no evidence to support allegations that he had received funding from South African front groups. Lefever's brother Donald had announced vigorous opposition to his brother's confirmation, which Ernest countered by proclaiming Donald to be "a proponent of unilateral disarmament." In a telephone conversation with Senator Percy, Donald Lefever stated that this allegation was false. In any case, Donald Lefever said, he opposes his brother's confirmation because of the latter's views on human rights, not as a result of any other considerations. Another source of controversy has been Lefever's involvement with the Nestlé Corporation, which made a large contribution to his center at a time when he was defending the Swiss company's position in the controversy over sales of infant formula to nursing mothers in the third world. Under Senator Christopher Dodd's persistent questioning, the Nestlé connection got a good deal of attention, none of it to Lefever's advantage.

But the substantive concern about Lefever focused on two major issues: his view of human rights activism by the United States, and his staunch support for South Africa and for South Korea, Argentina, and other authoritarian states. Lefever strongly believes that the United States should keep its mouth shut and its wallet open when such states abuse the human rights of their people. Testifying before the House Subcommittee on International Organizations in July 1979, he said:

> In my view, the United States should remove from the statute books all clauses that establish a human rights standard or condition that must be met by another sovereign government before our government transacts normal business with it, unless specifically waived by the President. It should not be necessary for any friendly state to 'pass' a human rights 'test' before we extend normal trade relations, sell arms, or provide economic or security assistance.

"When I made that broad statement," Lefever told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on May 18, "I goofed." He realized his "goof," he said, three months ago, when he was nominated for the position of assistant secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. At the Senate hearing, Lefever described his previous position as "too flat." Now, he said, he would "abide by the law of the land" on human rights. But under questioning from Senator Paul Sarbanes, Lefever refused to commit himself to the idea that the statutes he is now prepared to abide by should be kept on the books. He would only say that under his tutelage all the human rights statutes would be reveiwed, and that he would then decide what to recommend to the administration. He was unprepared to state that the position to which he aspires has an unassailable purpose, or even that it should continue to exist.

LEFEVER'S opposition to human rights abuses has been expressed in peculiar ways. In 1974, on the question of torture in Chile, he explained that a former State Department official had "pointed out that we must understand the normal level of police abuse which goes on in that part of the world as a residual practice of the Iberian tradition." He believes that authoritarian regimes with foreign policies allied to that of the US should not be subject to linkage of economic and military assistance with the alleviation of human rights abuses. In the Winter 1978 issue of *Policy Review* he argued that:

> the human rights activists tend to underestimate the totalitarian threat to the West and the totalitarian temptation in the Third World. They neglect or trivialize the fundamental political and moral struggle of our time—the protracted conflict between forces of total government based on coercion and the proponents of limited government based on popular consent and humane law.

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> In their preoccupation with the minor abridgement of certain rights in authoritarian states, they often overlook the massive threats to the liberty of millions.

Thus, Lefever argued, "giving human rights a central place tends to subordinate, blur, or distort all other relevant policy considerations." In Lefever's view, in fact, human rights should be avoided altogether as a foreign policy concern. For "international law forbids any state from interfering in the internal, political, judicial, and economic affairs of another state." As Louis Henkin of Columbia University, an international legal expert, pointed out at the confirmation hearings, not only is this an incorrect statement with respect to international law, it also places Lefever squarely on the side of the Soviet Union regarding American expressions of concern for dissidents in that state. In *Policy Review* Lefever went on to say:

> . . . our policies of nuclear deterrence should be determined by our understanding of the Soviet nuclear threat and our trade policies toward Moscow should be determined by our economic and security interests. Neither should be influenced, much less determined, by the extent of human rights violations in the Soviet Union.

Lefever's view that human rights abuses in other countries are none of our business is so all-encompassing, in principle, that the much-heralded distinction between "authoritarian" and "totalitarian" states isn't of much consequence. Either way, Lefever thinks, the US shouldn't let human rights issues influence the making of foreign policy. He wrote in the *New York Times* on January 24, 1977, "Economic and military aid should be given or withheld to encourage sound external policies, but not to reform domestic institutions or practices, however obnoxious."

NEVERTHELESS, Lefever did proclaim support at his confirmation hearings for the Jackson-Vanik Amendment regarding the emigration of Soviet Jews, a position endorsed by many members of the Reagan administration. And while Lefever spoke at his hearings in support of the Helsinki Accords and the Madrid Review Conference, his prior views and his opposition to linkage give human rights groups serious cause for concern. Robert Bernstein, the chairman of the US Helsinki Watch Committee, testified:

> Ernest Lefever, in opposing the concern for internal human rights practices in other countries as a factor that should influence American foreign policy, opposes the Helsinki Accords as interpreted by Presidents Ford, Carter, and Reagan. Ironically, he stands with the Soviet Union, which, despite its signature on the Helsinki Accords, now says that its human rights practices are not the business of other countries.

Rather than waging a strong campaign against human rights violations in the USSR through his position in the government, Lefever would prefer to rely on the "private sector." In his July 1979 testimony before the House Subcommittee on International Organizations he said, "The established channels of democracy, to say nothing of vocal private groups such as Freedom House, in the United States and Western Europe, can remind Moscow of its obligations under [the Helsinki Accords]."

For Ernest Lefever, government has very clear priorities. As he wrote in another *New York Times* essay, on June 18, 1980, "In ethical and practical terms, the first task of government is to govern; the second: to govern justly; the third: to govern democratically." Governing without justice or democracy is certainly possible. But it is worrisome to see a prospective senior American human rights official rank democracy so low in the priorities of governance.

In Lefever's writings, one assumption remains constant: right-wing regimes—allies of the United States in foreign policy—govern justly, or at least are committed to governing justly and to a process leading to democracy. He does not question the dedication of these autocratic allies to freedom. "It is both embarrassing and counterproductive," Lefever has argued, "to threaten punitive measures against friendly, but less than democratic, regimes which are attempting to achieve a reasonable balance between authority and freedom at home, often under severely trying circumstances, and are pursuing constructive policies abroad."

The most powerful moment at the Lefever hearings was the appearance of someone who gave no testimony, but bore witness simply by his presence. He was Jacobo Timerman, the liberal (and anti-communist) Argentinean publisher who was jailed for 20 months by one of Lefever's "friendly, but less than democratic, regimes." When Senator Percy mentioned that Timerman was there, the packed hearing room exploded in applause. Because Timerman is a Jew, a Zionist, and a newspaperman who publicized the disappearances of thousands of Argentinean citizens in the 1970s, he was imprisoned, tortured, stripped of his citizenship, and exiled by the military authorities. After the hearing, he told reporters that the Carter human rights policies had saved "thousands and thousands of lives all over the world," and he added: "Silent diplomacy is silence. Quiet diplomacy is surrender." How much torture, how much repression, how many disappearances does it take to upset "a reasonable balance between authority and freedom"? According to Lefever, "It's a judgment call."

If Ernest Lefever is confirmed, we can expect a dramatic decline in the number and credibility of US actions in defense of human rights around the world. Senator Jesse Helms, one of Lefever's strongest supporters, will be pleased. But for the victims of human rights abuses, Lefever's confirmation will be an important loss.

Howard Stanislawski

Howard Stanislawski is based in New York and writes on international affairs.

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A specter is helping Europe.

Eurosocialism Takes Off

by Michael Harrington

Is Europe moving left? The evidence that it is seems compelling. On May 10 François Mitterrand won the French presidency, giving the left real power for the first time since Léon Blum and the Popular Front in the 1930s. On May 11 the Swedish conservative coalition government fell apart. The Socialists are likely to defeat its patched-together replacement in next year's general election. The British municipal elections earlier in May were a clear rebuff to Margaret Thatcher. In Italy it is quite possible that Bettino Craxi of the Italian Socialist party will become the first non-Christian Democratic prime minister of the postwar period. In Spain, if democracy survives, the government may well be led by the most popular politician in that country today—Felipe Gonzalez, the young leader of the Socialist Workers party. Joop den Uyl of Holland may return to power late this month. Even in the May 10 West Berlin elections the Social Democratic loss was partly caused by the strong showing of a significant "alternate list" of ecologists and left-wing activists.

If all of the optimistic predictions come true—and if socialist rule continues in Austria, Norway, Denmark, and West Germany—practically the entire Old World (and Israel as well) could be governed by the democratic socialist left within the next year. But the complexities of European politics cannot be reduced to a linear left-right scale. What must be understood is that the European socialists have been redefining the meaning of "left" over the past decade or so. Few American observers, including the media, have yet grasped the significance of this political evolution.

Admittedly, I write with a certain bitterness. Last December I helped organize a major conference on "Eurosocialism and America," which was sponsored by the Institute for Democratic Socialism. Speakers and guests included Willy Brandt, François Mitterrand, Olof Palme, Joop den Uyl, Tony Benn, and Felipe Gonzalez. The conference was largely ignored by the press. A veteran freelance journalist told Nancy Lieber, the conference supervisor, that our speakers were all "has-beens." Now one of these has-beens is the president-elect of France and two (Palme and den Uyl) are more than likely to become prime ministers in the near future.

Eurosocialism has gone through at least three distinctive phases since the end of World War II; it may well be on the eve of a fourth, particularly dynamic, phase. From 1945 to the mid-1960s, Eurosocialist foreign policy was dominated by the cold war. I heard Paul Henri Spaak, who had been the secretary general of NATO, tell a Socialist International congress in 1963 that "we" had been forced to make some serious compromises because of our pro-Western stance in the American-Soviet conflict. Now, Spaak continued (it was just after the signing of the Moscow Test Ban treaty and before the assassination of John Kennedy), there are new possibilities and we can take our own principles more seriously again.

On the domestic side, that first postwar period was marked by what can be loosely called a shift to the right. In formal statements, like the Godesberg Program of the German Social Democrats in 1959, and in influential books like Anthony Crosland's *The Future of Socialism*, the "final conflict" celebrated in the *Internationale* gave way to the Keynesian welfare state and the mixed economy. At the same time, the party of the proletariat became the party of all workers, including middle-class professionals; it abandoned any pretense of an official Marxist *Weltanschauung* so as to appeal to Catholics. It's easy to deprecate the pragmatism of that time, with its naive faith that a perpetual capitalist boom would make socialist reforms possible. But it should not be forgotten that those undramatic years also saw the creation of welfare states infinitely more generous and humane than America's.

Still, by the mid-1960s the Eurosocialists had begun to worry that their un-visionary welfarism would not appeal to the new generation. In May 1968 the events in France dramatized that problem: how would the children of affluence—the college youth then at the barricades—and the working-class heirs of "the wretched of the earth" find common ground?

At the 1969 congress of the Socialist International, this was one of the central questions discussed. *Mirabile dictu*, those debates had some practical impact. The Dutch Labor party succeeded, in effect, in integrating much of the new left into one of the most fascinating, and least-known, Socialist parties in Europe; the German Young Socialists decided to pursue the "long march through the institutions" and became a growing power within the SPD (the party's current foreign policy spokesperson is a former Young Socialist leader); and in France, a remarkable politician named François Mitterrand took the remnants of the most discredited Socialist party in Europe, the SFIO (the initials of this party, with its sorry record on Algeria, ironically stood

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for "French Section of the Worker's International") and molded them into the force that inherited most of the political dynamism of May 1968.

In the early 1970s it seemed that Eurosocialism had successfully made the transition into a new period. Then came OPEC and stagflation. Socialist governments fell in Britain, Sweden, and Portugal; the Union of the Left lost the French legislative elections of 1978; and the "turn to the right" was on—at least according to superficial accounts in the press. But actually it was incumbents, not socialists *per se*, who were being turned out of office. Socialist parties were often defeated because they had made the mistake of winning on the eve of a world economic crisis. (Similarly today, the socialist success in countries like France and Sweden arises at least in part because conservatives—as the "ins"—are finally being blamed for the failures of capitalism.)

THE EUROSOCIALISTS themselves began to realize in the 1970s that they had to develop new programs. The first postwar period was over. There was not going to be endless, crisis-free growth with stable prices as the basis for social reform. Stagflation was at hand, the third world was a growing factor in international politics, and American leadership of the Western alliance had become increasingly erratic. With these crises in international relations and economics the Eurosocialists reformulated their political philosophy and their practical proposals.

The new Eurosocialist attitude toward domestic economic policy—involving a decentralist, often non-statist vision of socialism—cannot be understood apart from the political and social trends that gave rise to it. One such trend is the vitality of the leadership. Mitterrand's party is a case in point. Its first secretary (party leader), Lionel Jospin, is 44 years old; one of its most important feminist leaders, Edith Cresson, is 47; Michel Rocard, who was a presidential candidate before Mitterrand announced, is 51; Pierre Mauroy, a prospective prime minister or cabinet member, is 52. And the leader of the party's left wing, Jean-Pierre Chevenement, is only 42. Mitterrand's Socialist party has brought a new generation to power.

The Catholic vote also has played a crucial role in the development of Eurosocialism. In the French election the Socialists won the Catholic left, and the Catholic trade union left in particular. After World War II Catholic workers organized the Confederation of Christian Workers, an organization that was deeply hostile to the anti-clerical tradition of the Socialists. ("We don't speak of socialism here," a Catholic union leader told a 1962 convention delegate who dared to cite Jean Jaurès and Léon Blum). But over the years the Confederation of Christian Workers dropped its confessional identification and became the Confederation of Democratic Workers advocating a "self-managed" and decentralized socialism. That signaled the reemergence of one of the major trends in 19th-century French socialism.

The CFDT was particularly successful in organizing workers in the most technologically advanced sectors, while the Communists—the General Confederation of Labor—were concentrated in manufacturing. In May 1968 the CFDT conducted the most militant struggles. And during the 1970s this once Catholic, now decentralist socialist, union federation became a major element in the new Socialist party. As the Socialists outpolled the Communists and became the first party of the French left in the mid-1970s, the party also gained new adherents within the Communist-led labor federation itself.

Thus a Socialist critique of "statification" and a proposal for "*autogoestion*" (worker self-management) developed out of a social, economic, and political process. This remains a major point of difference between the Communists and the Socialists. The French Communists, in addition to being one of the most Stalinist of European Communist parties, are piously conservative in their defense of the bureaucratic and centralist model of socialism. The big news for the Western press has been that Mitterrand wants to nationalize a number of industries. For anyone who has followed the development of French socialism, the real question is whether Mitterrand and company will succeed in changing the locus of economic decision-making from the top to the bottom. In a remarkable book, *La Nouvelle Economie Française*, 38-year-old Jacques Attali, one of Mitterrand's chief economic advisers, even proposes making major economic investments on the community level.

THE EMPHASIS on decentralism and worker's control is not, of course, a uniquely French notion. Anthony Crosland, the late theorist of the "social democratic" wing of the British Labour party, once told me he thought industrial democracy on the shop floor would be a central Socialist preoccupation in the years to come. And in Sweden, proposals have emerged for "collective profit-sharing—another road to a non-statist and decentralized socialism.

The Swedish Socialist and labor movements have long been committed to a "solidaristic" wage policy, pushing for proportionally higher raises for those at the bottom of the income scale than for those at the top. One result was that highly skilled Swedish workers received less than their counterparts in other capitalist countries, and advanced Swedish industries got a proficient work force at lower cost. The blue-collar labor federation, LO, instructed its chief economist, the German-born Rudolf Meidner, to develop a plan that would recoup that extra profit for the working class. Meidner's scheme called for corporations to pay a tax, in the form of voting stock rather than money, that would go to a worker-controlled mutual fund. In this way an enterprise would socialize itself over a period of time, but the ownership would be vested in the workers (with some public repre-

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sentation on the board) instead of in the government.

The Swedish Socialist movement disagrees about exactly what the Meidner Plan would accomplish. Meidner himself stresses income redistribution. Olof Palme argues that the plan will facilitate "collective capital formation." Workers, he argues, will be willing to restrain wage demands if they see that they will be the direct beneficiaries of the increased investment which their restraint makes possible. Similar ideas are being proposed by the Dutch and Danish Socialists.

FOR THE SWEDES this decentralist shift in ownership would be a significant change. The Swedish Socialist party nationalized almost nothing during 44 years of uninterrupted rule. At the end of that extraordinary tenure, the economy was 90 percent privately owned, five percent cooperative, and only five percent government property. Indeed, the "bourgeois governments" of the recent past have nationalized much more property than the Socialists ever did (mostly by taking over capitalist failures, a favorite pastime of conservatives, including Margaret Thatcher). But now Palme and the Swedish Socialists realize they can no longer confine themselves to a policy Gunnar Myrdal once described as "socializing consumption rather than production." That tactic assumed a healthy, expanding capitalism that no longer exists in Europe. There is a strong element of economic necessity behind the change in Sweden, but what is significant—what makes it part of the "Eurosocialist" phenomena—is that the radical new mode of ownership being proposed is decentralist.

Another reform born of economic necessity—a shorter work week—was discussed by the leaders of the Socialist parties of the European Economic Community last month in Amsterdam, and approved by the representative of the EEC trade unions who participated in the meeting. According to Joop den Uyl, the argument for reducing the work week is based on the theory that world capitalism faces a period of relatively slow growth in the foreseeable future. One of the ways to maintain a full employment policy under such conditions is to reduce people's working hours. In the form of the legislated four-week annual vacation, this was one of the most effective reforms of Léon Blum's Popular Front. Mitterrand is talking about going beyond the Blum scheme to a five-week *vacances*, a demand unions are likely to support throughout Europe.

The Eurosocialists actively pursue cooperation among European and non-European nations alike. Writing in *Le Monde* shortly before the French election, Jan Tinbergen, the Dutch socialist and Nobel laureate in economics, noted that European cooperation is a key part of the Mitterrand program, a view shared by the Socialists in Holland. There might be, Tinbergen argued, joint European research into alternate energy investments, the optimal level of decentralization, and job generation. And Europeans could work together on a commitment to increase employment opportunities in the third world. Here the domestic and international ideals of Eurosocialism merge.

The only thing the Socialists have ever really nationalized, Paul Henri Spaak once remarked, is socialism. But now there is a strong tendency on the part of the Eurosocialists to internationalize their movement. The incarnation of that drive is Willy Brandt. When Brandt became president of the Socialist International at its 1976 congress in Geneva, he accepted the office on two conditions: that major Socialist leaders would actively participate in the work of what had become largely a ceremonial and letterhead organization, and that the SI would work with the third world. In the ensuing years those pledges have been spectacularly redeemed.

The SI worked in Nicaragua with the Sandinistas when they were guerrillas and is cooperating now with the African National Congress, SWAPO, and other groups fighting South African apartheid. More recently Brandt and the SI have been working for a negotiated political settlement of the civil war in El Salvador where the opposition, the Revolutionary Democratic Front, is lead by Guillermo Ungo, the head of the SI Salvadoran affiliate. At their Amsterdam meeting last month, SI leaders heard from Carlos Gallardo, a leader of the Guatemalan opposition (three of the six other leaders of his group have been murdered), and in June the SI's Committee to Defend the Nicaraguan Revolution, headed by Felipe Gonzalez, will convene in Managua. But these moves have raised controversy, even within the International. There are very few democratic socialist movements outside the industrialized countries. For a variety of historic reasons, the "socialisms" of the third world are authoritar-

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ian at best, totalitarian at worst. The line between relating to such movements and endorsing them is hard to draw. The SI's turn toward the third world is politically and morally problematic. In my opinion, it is no less necessary for that. And with all the difficulties, it represents a major breakthrough for the Eurosocialists.

THEN THERE is the issue of the Middle East. The Israeli Labor party is the only longtime Middle Eastern affiliate of the SI. So when Brandt and Kreisky met in Vienna with Yasser Arafat in the summer of 1979 it was a profound political embarrassment and shock to the Israeli Socialists. The issue was aired at an SI Bureau meeting in Lisbon in the fall of 1979, and the general feeling, it seemed to me, was that it was perfectly legitimate for Brandt and Kreisky to pursue contacts with all sides if the aim was to encourage a negotiated settlement that would recognize both Israeli and Palestinian rights. But clearly many felt it was wrong to imply recognition of the PLO, by meeting with its representatives, before they express willingness to accept Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state. The Lisbon meeting did not come to a vote. The SI is a consensus body in which no national party allows foreigners, even foreign socialists, to dictate its internal policies. It was more or less in that consensus spirit that the November 1980 Madrid congress of the SI saw Kreisky and Shimon Peres issue a joint statement and then voted unanimously that the hope of peace in the Middle East—and the interests of all parties—lay with the election of the Israeli Labor party this June.

The Eurosocialists' East-West views may turn out to be even more interesting to Washington than their North-South and Middle East involvement. What the Socialists are saying, I think, presages a larger process: the emergence in Europe on the right *and* the left of a feeling that the Old World can no longer be a docile and automatic ally of the New. One felt that with particular force at the SI leaders' meeting in Vienna in February 1980, shortly after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and America's shelving of SALT, among other moves, in response to it. Every leader of European socialism except Gonzalez was present and there seemed to be a consensus: the Soviet invasion was morally and politically wrong, a blow to peace and to the right of national self-determination; and America's frightened riposte was deeply disturbing, since Europe, as the most heavily armed nuclear area in the world, could be the first and perhaps the only victim of some accidental destabilization of the balance of terror.

There was not a pacifist attitude around that table. Mitterrand talked with great precision about the many possible explanations of the Soviet move, one of which was a Soviet thrust toward Pakistan and the Arabian Sea. If that was the case, Mitterrand said, it was a prelude to World War III. But he and the others finally had a less apocalyptic interpretation and stressed the necessity of negotiated disarmament, both nuclear and conventional, as they did in Amsterdam last month.

The Eurosocialists are split on the issue of theater nuclear forces—the SS-20s installed by the Soviets and NATO's response, the Cruise and Pershing missiles. The Dutch and Belgian parties favored negotiating before committing NATO to such missiles; the rest favored the commitment but using it to speed negotiations. But at all of these meetings there was a sense of urgency about negotiations and a fear of Washington's leisurely approach to talks—a fear, as Geoffrey Smith of the *Times* of London recently noted in the *Wall Street Journal*, that is spreading throughout Europe.

ON EAST-WEST as well as North-South issues, the Eurosocialists might well offer an important new point of departure. Theirs is the most cohesive Europe-wide political tendency that is pressing the issue of disarmament negotiations and doing so within the framework of substantial political power. Palme has already launched a disarmament commission modeled on Brandt's third world efforts; it could become another source of concrete proposals for negotiating an end to the arm's race. A Reagan administration bent on throwing money at military problems and sponsoring a simplistic and obsolete cold war view of a bipolar world will be upset by such a development.

I do not want to paint Eurosocialism the color of its own rose. There will not be "socialism in one country," not in France or Holland or Sweden, or even socialism on one continent. The Eurosocialists understand that the transition to a new society is a matter of an epoch, not an election. A radically new form of social life is doubtless on its way, but everything else about that future is yet to be decided. The Eurosocialists are not the prophets and architects of a millenium. They merely have some new ideas that just might work, which is remarkable enough in this time of exhausted ideologies. Their socialism is decentralist, youthful, innovative, reaching out toward the third world, articulating the disarmament concerns of most of the people of Europe—left, right, and center.

At a dinner party in New York about five years ago François Mitterrand tried to explain the new policies he would follow if he came to power through a victory of the Union of the Left. Another guest, a *New York Times* editorial board member, ignored all that and asked incessantly about the Communists. He used categories that were outworn in the late 1940s, ignoring what he was being told about the 1970s and 1980s. Americans no longer have the luxury of such bad intellectual manners. They are going to listen to the Eurosocialists because the democratic electorates of the continent will make them do so. And if they can get over their preconceptions they will hear some new ideas. They may even be inspired to a new vision, seeing ways of helping this country through the greatest structural crisis of capitalism in a generation.

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A political phoenix becomes 'Monsieur le Président.'

Mitterrand the Man

by Franz-Olivier Giesbert

Does France really know whom it elected president on May 10? A man of a thousand faces, from the moderate cabinet minister to the bulldog of the left, François Mitterrand is certainly the most mysterious French statesman since General de Gaulle. Slandered, styled in turn a Machiavelli or a Kerensky, he has long lived in the shadow cast by his own past political incarnations. "Oh, come on," he would say to me, with a mixture of amusement and irritation, "surely you can come up with two or three threads to tie it all together and give coherence to my life."

One thing about him has never changed; his tremendous determination (even if it hasn't always been used in the service of socialism). For years now he has been prowling at the gates of supreme power with the same air of a stubborn peasant. Nothing stops him: phoenix-like, Mitterrand knows how to rise from his own ashes. Far from finishing him off, defeats fortify him. I have often accompanied this indefatigable political evangelist on his long dives into the depths of France. Traveling without aides or staff—his briefcase containing only a toothbrush, a pair of slippers, a novel, and some files—he would comb the country far and wide, always with the same fervor. Grabbing sandwiches on the run, he stayed in modest hotels and spoke, depending on the political climate, in huge, packed auditoriums or bleak, uncrowded rooms. He never despaired. His dream was to continue elevating a party whose membership, 12 years ago, had fallen to five percent of the registered voters.

As late as the end of last year, François Mitterrand looked like a 64-year-old has-been selling antique solutions. His popularity was at its lowest ebb. His chances of beating Valéry Giscard d'Estaing appeared very slim, even if he liked to quip among friends that "Reagan's election has opened up beautiful prospects for sexagenarians, even septuagenarians." When he decided to make the race, most political experts were convinced that the left would suffer its tenth defeat since the birth of the Fifth Republic. But after four or five previous political resurrections, Mitterrand began his most spectacular rise of all. His great gift is patience. One day I heard him whisper: "When I was a prisoner in Germany during the Second World War, I didn't gain my freedom until my third escape attempt. Perhaps I'll be elected president on my third try."

Franz-Olivier Giesbert's biography of François Mitterrand has just been reissued in Paris. He is a senior correspondent for *Le Nouvel Observateur*. This article was translated from the French by Michael Dirda.

The strangest thing is not that François Mitterrand defeated a threadbare incumbent. It is that he has won so completely the gamble he made at the dawn of the Fifth Republic. Under his tutelage, French socialism has become the leading political force in France, and the Communist party, its hereditary enemy, has been routed, electorally as well as ideologically. The page of history that has been turned is not only that of 23 years of conservatism. It is also that of the Communist preeminence over a left it had long paralyzed.

The rebuilder of the French Socialist party came to socialism late in life, after a political career of canny pragmatism. François Mitterrand likes to say that the whole environment of his childhood, beginning with his family, encouraged him to go over to the left. But first he threw his hat into the center—which was logical for someone from Charente, a gentle, rolling province in the middle of France. His parents worshipped God, order, and the novelist François Mauriac. Mitterrand *père* was a railway stationmaster. It was only natural for his son to take the train from Angoulême to Paris, like Balzac's hero Rastigna, and with the same determination to rise quickly in the world. In 1938 he wrote to his sister: "It all comes back to this—to win or to lose. To stand still is to begin to lose."

This is a very French story. François Mitterrand embodies the country of window shutters and high fences; the deepest ambitions always take root in the provinces. The difficulty is that all sorts of images will be juxtaposed later—but not blended—with this solid Balzacian character. These later images end up scrambling everything. After law studies, the war, and imprisonment in the stalags of the Third Reich, Mitterrand worked briefly for the Vichy regime, in the general commissioner's office for prisoners of war. He even received a decoration—the "Francisque"—accorded to those who "since the war began have demonstrated a strong devotion to the work and person of Marshal Pétain." This has enabled his enemies to accuse him, throughout his career, of collaboration during the German occupation; it is a fiction. He was a resistance fighter, and not one of those who joined at the eleventh hour either. He used his official position to supply forged papers to his comrades in the camps. By the time his Vichy medal came in the mail in 1943, he had gone underground and escaped to London.

In truth, he performed admirably in the resistance. And there are still flashes of the adventurous, even daredevil Mitterrand of the occupation. In 1971 he made his way secretly to India, during the war with Pakistan, to share several days in the life of Bengali

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Vint Lawrence

refugees. "I need to be in contact with real misery again," he wrote to his party. This formidable tactician is still given to such outbursts of romanticism. If his 35 years in politics have hardened him, apparently they haven't spoiled him. But those 35 years were not all spent under the banner of political morality either.

At the time of the liberation, Mitterrand was uncontestably of the left. Anti-bourgeois, he eagerly attacked "the unheard-of cash flaunted by people who make their greatest profits during wars." But when he ran for the National Assembly in the 1946 elections, he turned his back on the revolutionary ideals of the resistance and flew the colors of a tepid middle-of-the-road coalition that was riddled with nostalgia for the Third Republic, which had led France to defeat in 1940. He recognizes this today: "I was elected, it's true, by an extremely diverse group of voters, and without any opponent on the right." He ran against a Socialist as well as a Communist. His program was unambiguous: "No bureaucratic waste, no nationalization of industry, no Communists in positions of power."

A few weeks later, this same man joined the Ramadier government, where Christian Democrats, Socialists, and Communists all rubbed shoulders. At age 30, he found himself in charge of a Veterans Administration infiltrated by Communist militants. He checked their operations masterfully. The Fourth Republic quickly discovered that he was one of its strong men. Sincere and able, he met every test, including the most bitter one of all, that cold war which drove so many politicians crazy on both sides of the Atlantic.

As soon as the Communist cabinet ministers had been stripped of their functions by Ramadier, the party, as both its members and foes call it, organized agitation on all fronts. At the Ministry of Information, where he firmly controlled the state-owned radio, Mitterrand launched an ideological counterattack. Decidedly the opposite of a "fellow-traveler" or "crypto-Communist," he was a brave, tough soldier defending the system in hand-to-hand political combat. One cannot understand Mitterrand without imagining him at the podium of the National Assembly in 1947, enduring the insults of Maurice Thorez, the secretary-general of the Communist party: "*Provocateur*! You sound like Goering!" Before the verbal terrorism of the Communists he has always stood like marble.

Eleven times a cabinet minister, Mitterrand was one of the stars of the Fourth Republic, the regime of the "little parties," which, as de Gaulle once said, "stir their little pots of soup, each at its own little corner of the fire." Mitterrand led one of those key groups in the Chamber of Deputies that can make or break majorities. And he gradually made himself recognized as one of the liberal leaders of French politics. Decades later, he still defends his role. But regardless of what he may say, one regret must torment him. It is that he made the same mistake about the Algerian question as did everyone else in the establishment of the time.

When he arrived at the Ministry of the Interior in 1954, he certainly intended to loosen the backward colonial system under which Algeria suffered, a French colony against its will. But one week after a visit during which he claimed to have found three Algerian *départements* "in a state of peace and prosperity," the rebellion broke out, leading inevitably to independence. Mitterrand protested, and this was his tragedy: "The only negotiation possible is war." He seemed to be two men at once in that moment. On the one hand, he was the government man, the top cop of France, who meant to make "republican legality" respected—by force of arms, if necessary. On the other, he was the liberal who sought to ease the burden that had been crushing the Algerian people for more than a century. He failed to understand that history had taken charge.

But four years later he had the intuition that would gradually erase his old errors and make him one of the most important politicians of the last quarter-century. Bleeding from the war in Algeria, the Fourth Republic surrendered to General de Gaulle. To forge an opposition to the general-president, Mitterrand didn't hesitate to approach the Communists, who had been languishing in their political ghetto since the 1940s. Out of this came an extraordinary gamble that sometimes gave him vertigo: the Union of the Left.

Mitterrand first thought of unity because of his anti-Gaullism, of course. His hatred of de Gaulle, which was far too passionate for there not to have been a little love mixed in, was of long standing. During the war he had been summoned to Algiers by the head of the Free French, who intended to unify the resist-

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ance activities of former prisoners under the direction of one of his nephews. "Eh," grumbled the tall general to the young know-it-all, "it appears that you travel around in British airplanes." Mitterrand: "It didn't occur to me to check the trademark before getting on board." The conversation was cut short. It never started again. De Gaulle, contemptuous, never condescended to answer Mitterrand, who, during his presidency, turned into a Cassandra with an accusing finger and a voice trembling with indignation before the prospect of a "dictatorship" that never happened. Still, the left was off on a new foot.

Paradoxical as it might seem to American liberals, François Mitterrand's advocacy of a united left was also motivated by anti-communism. The explanation —simply put—is no secret even to the party: history has made clear that the French left can neither win without the Communists nor govern with them. Hence the left's weakness since the Popular Front of 1936. What could be done? Rather than sink into alliances with the right, as under the Fourth Republic, the Socialist party should take up the social struggles too long abandoned to the party. This was Mitterrand's strategy when he became head of the Socialists in 1971. But back in the 1950s he had already been declaring: "The best way to combat the Communist party in a democracy is to achieve some of those social goals thoroughly acceptable to the working class, but currently appropriated by this party."

Of all the politicians I've met, on the right or on the left, Mitterrand is certainly—along with the Portuguese Socialist Soares—the most thoroughly forewarned about communism in all its forms. It may seem strange that it should be just this humanist, so resistant to the Marxist ideological mystique, who has worked with the militants of the CP. But he did so in the context of a larger political analysis, without ever losing sight of the dangers. "They tell me that the Communists have a big union," he murmured. "I will have the people." Or again: "If ever the Communists attempt to infiltrate the operations of the government, as at the time of the Liberation, then I myself will lead the attack against them. And they will be swept away in the twinkling of an eye at the next election." From all the evidence, the Union of the Left was a torment for him. It was also a constant struggle.

ON JUNE 28, 1972, the very day he made common cause with the party, Mitterrand announced his intention to pluck the Communist chicken. At a Socialist International congress in Vienna, he stated emphatically before the heads of the European social democracies: "Our fundamental objective is to form a great Socialist party on the territory occupied by the CP itself, so that out of five million Communist voters, three million can vote socialist."

The party's leaders sneered disdainfully. But they were too sure of themselves. Georges Marchais, the party chief, eventually made overtures to Mitterrand: "Let's be friends." Now and then he stopped at Mitterrand's home, but the Socialist leader obstinately remained on his guard and in his office, leaving Marchais to watch television with his wife. When Marchais realized that the union only profited the Socialist party, the Communist secretary-general began the increasingly violent campaign against Mitterrand and his party that led to the breakup of the united left in 1977.

Logically, the Socialist leader should have changed his strategy. But he didn't. He arched his back under the Communist blows. He spoke as if nothing had changed. Communist voters began to realize that their party was playing into Giscard's hand, and several hundred thousand of them voted for Mitterrand in the first round of the presidential election. The CP, which lost a quarter of its members, was suddenly thrown back four decades, registering only 15 percent of the voters. With the approach of the legislative elections in June, the polls give the party a score of only 13 percent. The Socialist party should rise from 26 to 36 percent.

TOMORROW Mitterrand can be the Roosevelt of the French left. Suspicious of the Anglo-Saxon world he hardly knows, the new president has a definite world view, third world in orientation, but not neutral. He relies on the kind of team France hasn't seen for a long time—Pierre Mauroy, the mayor of Lille; Jacques Delors, the former adviser to the Gaullist prime minister Jacques Chaban-Delmas; and Michel Rocard, chief of the modern Socialists. Intellectually and institutionally, Mitterrand has the means to construct a French-style social democracy for future generations.

There is a problem. It's not the participation of the Communists in his government. Mitterrand will try to do without them. If he must call on them to construct a parliamentary majority, the president knows how to control them, as he has proved already. He is even convinced that he could break their power by confronting them with their own contradictions. Possibly. The big problem in reality is the economy. The economic program of the new head of state is, in many respects, a cookbook of recipes that are both outdated and inflationary. Happily, he is not a man to take his own campaign rhetoric too seriously. He never read his old platform with the Communists until after he signed it. But having made himself a career, he has now found himself an ethic. He is a Socialist.

Yet he sometimes has the air of believing, like Harold Wilson, that socialism is statism. During the campaign, François Mitterrand promised to nationalize 11 major industries and all the banks. If he knows how to draw lessons from British Labour's experience, he will try to decentralize French society rather than bureaucratize it further. If not, defeat again awaits the French left. It will have the face of economic decline. Fortunately, with this quiet socialist steeped in history and realpolitik, the worst is far from certain. For the moment, France expects something closer to the best.

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Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Pleasant and Otherwise

Time flies (I'm told) in the outside world; in the film world, it absolutely whizzes. A couple of years can constitute an era—as, for instance, the era of US youth pictures in the late 1960s. Twenty years, in film history, acquire a neoclassical perspective.

Remember—which may be the most-used word in ads these days—remember the Italian films of the 1950s and early 1960s? I don't mean masterpieces, but the agreeable, well-turned, flatteringly wry, seemingly truthful romances of Italian life directed by Comencini and Monicelli and Risi and others, starring De Sica and Sordi and Tognazzi and, early in their careers, Lollobrigida and Loren and Mastroianni, pictures like *Bread, Love, and Dreams* and *Too Bad She's Bad* and *Big Deal on Madonna Street* and *Everybody Go Home*. After the imperative first wave of truth telling at the end of World War II, after the neo-realism that involved some of the people above, the realism nestled into domestic coziness, not to atone for sins of omission and commission but to enjoy once again Italian character—or at least what Italians like to think of as Italian character. (Every nation has such an image. Think of *Cousin Cousine*.)

A new Italian picture, *Café Express*, just because it *is* new, reminds us of how long it is since pictures like it were fairly usual, and welcome. *Café Express* was written by Nanni Loy, who directed, and Elvio Porta, and as is so often the (unacknowledged) case, the skill in the script is the largest part of what makes the film enjoyable. It has one of those neat shapes that are a comfort when what's contained is good. The story takes place on one relatively brief nighttime train journey, a suburban train making its way to Naples with lots of stops. The hero is a coffee vendor on the train who is vending without a license and who has a lot of adventures with various passengers and with railroad officials ganging up to nab this dangerous criminal. (I suppose that in Italian the second word of the title is *espresso*, punning on a kind of coffee and a kind of train service.) The episodes and characters are nicely mingled—a touch of heartbreak, a touch of danger, a lot of smiles, even a couple of laughs—and there's the modestly posed implication that we are watching Everyman making his trip through life, trying to earn a living.

Once the script was ready, all it needed was competent execution, not brilliance. It got the competence. Loy works with a light hand and, what's even more gratifying, gets his leading actor Nino Manfredi to do the same. (They've worked together before.) I thought Manfredi pretty hard to take in *Bread and Chocolate* and *Let's Talk about Men*, but Loy has held him in. No *prosciutto* virtuosity or heart-tugging. Manfredi plays it much as Ugo Tognazzi might have done, close to the emotional vest. His Scapino cleverness in intrigue, his desperate coward's courage in physical danger, his feeling for his invalid son-helper, are all aspects of a sufficiently genuine human being.

Result: a pleasant film. You think that's faint praise? How long is it since you've seen a consistently pleasant film?

In contrast, *I Sent a Letter to My Love* is unpleasant. This French film was directed by Moshe Mizrahi, an Israeli who works in France and who committed the elephantinely dank *Madame Rosa* with the star he uses again here, Simone Signoret. I went to the new one despite the earlier one, but I think my Mizrahi-going may now be concluded. He wrote the script with Gerard Brach from a novel by Bernice Rubens: it's built on what I'd called a failed Hungarian idea—that is, it's the sort of twisty, wistful plot that a Molnár or a Bus-Fekete might have considered and found wanting.

A mature woman, Signoret, is the nurse-companion of her somewhat younger paralyzed brother, Jean Rochefort. He, as we are made well aware, is paralyzed only in the legs. (One understands, *n'est-ce pas*?) They live, modestly but apparently without money worries, in a house on the Brittany coast. Every morning, the spinster who runs the local bakery, Delphine Seyrig, brings a fresh loaf of bread, and the three breakfast together.

The script then goes through torques of such laboriousness (which means impatience as we await the inevitable), such coyness, such flirtation with the repugnant that it's hard for the straining sun of whimsy to shine through the clouds of contrivance and near-pathology. Signoret, lonely, puts a lonely-hearts ad in the local paper, using a false name and a box number. Guess who answers, under his own name. Brother and sister continue their correspondence, more and more passionately. Why doesn't Rochefort recognize his sister's handwriting? Why doesn't she expect him to? She has to send a photograph, when he demands it, and she finds one in a second-hand shop; but then he demands a visit. She engages an actress from a local theater who—again this is unexplained—doesn't resemble the photograph. The brother, as best he can, attacks the actress, who flees.

The tone of the film never decides

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between quaintness or romance or darker realms of incest. It doesn't even mix them well. At the end Rochefort marries Seyrig. Why she is still unmarried and why he hasn't married her before are two more unexplained points. During the ceremony there is a long, long look between the brother at the altar, next to his bride, and his sister in the pew behind—before he exchanges vows. That look, instead of resolving matters, only further confuses this part-goo, part-sick script.

It's the sort of film, three characters in relatively confined circumstances, where we are expected to feel that, whatever the faults of the script, at least the performances are wonderful. The whole thing was built as a three-star occasion. But even here the film wobbles. Rochefort has long since demonstrated that he can range easily from farce to the serious without strain as if, to use a musical term, all roles lay in his middle voice. He's a bit like Donald Sutherland in that regard, and like Sutherland, credibility comes so easily for him that he rarely pushes deeper. What he does here is give the good performance that we expect, and I don't think it's ungrateful to say that this is not enough: some indication of stretch, extension in his work would have made it more interesting.

Signoret has become a bit distasteful, a woman of 60 who, long before she got there, allowed herself to turn into *la tante de* Miss Piggy. Her deliberate abuse of her body—her instrument—is close to Orson Welles's copout through obesity. Recently I saw *Casque d'Or* again, in which Signoret was golden and moving at 31. She is not now that woman twice as old, and her acting is not twice as mature. As her body has fattened, her acting has thinned: she does a lot of grunting and eye-brimming and Gallic shrugging. "Face-making to Order," the sign outside her door might say.

The only imaginative acting is done by Seyrig who is 10 years younger than Signoret and won't look like her 10 years from now. Just by *thinking* a mite dull-wittedly, Seyrig converts that face, which was one of the icons of the New Wave, into the revelation of a woman whose lack of acuity affects her looks, who evokes more pathos than desire.

And I confess a personal jealousy. How can Rochefort, confined to a wheelchair, deprived of any exercise, gorge himself daily on cake and bread and butter and jam and stay slim? Talk about movie fantasy.

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English professors' vested interest.

Literature as an Institution

by Leslie A. Fiedler

We live at a time when literature, high and low, has ceased to be an independent, self-perpetuating institution; yet it is more institutionalized than ever. The notion of literature as an institution responsible only to itself (always more myth than fact, perhaps) has haunted the mind of the West ever since the Renaissance attempted to set song and story free from established religion. At first this meant little more than changing masters—becoming not independent, but dependent on the needs and demands of the court rather than the church. But with the invention of printing, the growth of literacy, and especially the appearance of a "free market," literature seemed on the verge of total emancipation. To be sure, some writers found in the new economic context an occasion for a new kind of subservience to the marketplace. But the commodities such hucksters produced—as critics at that point began to insist—were subliterature, or paraliterature. "Real literature," though packaged and distributed side by side with commodity literature, was something quite different; it was responsive not to the laws of supply and demand, but to standards established by contemporary critics, the visible legislators of the invisible "Republic of Letters."

In the last decades of the 20th century, however, the critics themselves have been co-opted by the university as completely as the hucksters were by the marketplace. In effect, literature is what we teach in departments of English; or conversely, what we teach in departments of English is literature. Within that closed definitional circle, we perform the rituals by which we cast out unworthy pretenders from our ranks and induct true initiates, guardians of the standards by which all song and story presumably ought to be judged.

The penetration of academia by critics, as opposed to scholars and literary historians, along with the living poets and novelists about whom the critics wrote, did not occur until a generation or two ago. Robert Frost was, I believe, the first official writer-in-residence at any American college; he arrived at the University of Michigan in 1927, only a few years after his verse had been accepted into the English curriculum. Yet even after colleges in the United States had begun to teach contemporary works in the mother tongue, the prevailing academic definition of literature was still very different from that which moved most leading writers.

The former definition was sustained by succeeding generations of old-style professors, the sons, or less often the daughters, of the original American ruling class, who were sometimes eccentric but always genteel. Typically they had been trained in German universities, whence they returned, convinced of the virtues of rigorous Teutonic *Philologie*. But their tastes were determined by the values of Victorian England, which, to be sure, they believed to be universal and immortal, though they were being challenged even then by the extra-academic exponents of a rival definition of literature. However, those self-styled avant-gardists and experimentalists seemed to their opponents to be juvenile and perverse, and their Francophile assault on the Anglo Saxon/Germanic canon seemed to be more a bad joke than a real threat.

Nevertheless, in the years just before and after World War I, the taste of the disreputable dissenters triumphed in the larger literary world, and it seemed only a matter of time before their taste would carry the day inside the university. Its spokesmen had redeemed the reputations of Herman Melville and Walt Whitman and upped the value of the hitherto depressed literary stock of John Donne and Gerard Manley Hopkins, while they downgraded the value of Milton and Shelley, Longfellow and Tennyson. Moreover, though most of the earliest New Critics came from the same privileged caste as their academic opposites, they sought to de-bourgeoisfy themselves, to pass into the non-class or meta-class of Bohemians or Intellectuals.

In any case they were, by and large, not academics; their occasional brief flirtations with the classroom ended in such comic dénouements as Ezra Pound's expulsion from the faculty of Wabash College after he had harbored strippers in his room. They prided themselves on being amateurs and dilettantes; or if they were professionals at all, they were journalists, book reviewers, and especially contributors to, founders and editors of "little magazines"—adversary literary quarterlies.

What they all had in common was a commitment to modernism and a hatred for the bourgeois middle: middle-class morality, middling politics, and middlebrow taste. Not even on the extreme left did the extra-academics object to the elitism of the old academy. Instead they accused the professorial establishment of inadequate elitism: a failure to spot certain kinds of pretentious or pious kitsch, and a complementary blindness to the merits of experimental, highbrow literature.

This situation prevailed into the 1950s, well past my own entry into college teaching. By the end of the 1950s, the former outsiders had become insiders, although they were allowed in at first, perhaps, for reasons more demographic than ideological. The end of World War II had seen the influx into colleges and universities of vast hordes of government-subsidized students. Many of them were the first members of their families ever to be exposed to higher education. And to teach the succeeding waves of the continuing invasion, new faculty had to be recruited from the first waves. These were the sons and daughters, though still mainly sons, of working-class or petty-bourgeois parents (who were not even predominantly Northern European, much less *echt* Anglo-Saxon; and who, after a while, were overwhelmingly Eastern European and Jewish) and graduates of land grant universities or city colleges. Such cultural arrivistes more often began their literary careers by reading or contributing to the *Partisan Review* and the *Kenyon Review* rather than by submitting articles to the *PMLA*. Their elitism was thus quite different from their predecessors'. But once they were ensconced in English departments, they proved to be equally exclusive.

To their WASP predecessors, who were born of upper-class parents, educated at quality schools, and sustained by inherited wealth or marriage to money, an academic career represented

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merely a marginally acceptable vocation. But to the "new professorate" it represented a way of making it into a position of unaccustomed prestige, if not of power; it was a strategy for social climbing without seeming to "sell out" to the world of hucksterism or venal politics. I am not suggesting that they (*we*, I suppose I should say) did this deliberately; but it was at least subintended, and, in any case, it worked! It worked so well, in fact, that after a while those who were initially regarded as interlopers began to seem more at home than anyone else.

Indeed, by the late 1970s, the few remaining anti-academic critics tended to be primarily WASPs—either piously moralistic defenders of the "eternal verities," like John Gardner, or snide exponents of high camp, like Gore Vidal. However self-serving the case made by these two novelists against the academization of American fiction is, they are responding to a genuine problem. Not only are most of the novels prized by academic critics the work of writers who have sought shelter in the university, but their chief readership consists of teachers and students who study them in the classroom.

Almost no novels, in fact, seem any longer to be ends in themselves. As words on the page, they represent transitional stages on the way to a final form: if they are adjudged "high literature," they are represented by a diagram on the blackboard; or if classified as "low literature," they become images on the screen. English majors are taught to deplore the latter transformation as vulgarization, although it is perhaps better understood as the democratization of art, which is desirable as well as inevitable in a mass society. This seems especially true in the case of the novel, which was from the start a salable commodity: the product not of lonely genius and tradition, but of technology and the marketplace.

What seems to me to be aberrant and unnatural is the 19th-century attempt to separate from the ordinary run of fiction the "art novel"; by which I mean certain dense, complex works that are immediately available to only a tiny minority of readers, and later—with a teacher's help—to a slightly larger minority. As a result of this misguided taxonomic venture, teachers of English have indoctrinated their students to regard all prose fiction as necessarily divided into the majority novel and the minority novel, and only the latter is

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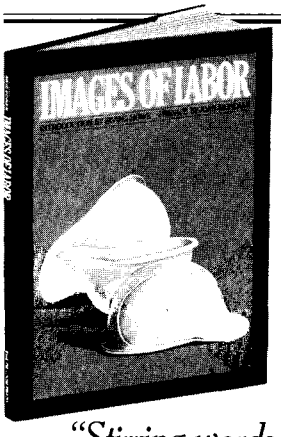

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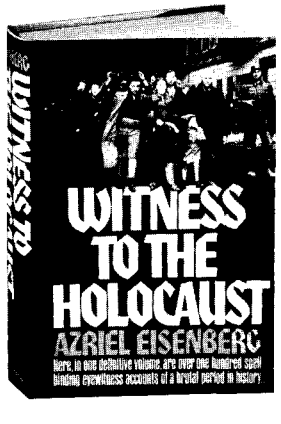

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considered to be worth teaching or learning.

In recent days, to be sure, as enrollment in traditional English courses shrinks, even traditionally trained professors feel compelled to offer courses in what they condescendingly call "popular literature," and think of as yet another "special area" of literary study. But majority literature is essentially nonspecialized, because it is all that remains of what was literature, whole and undivided, before the institution of universities. Courses that include nothing but what their instructors consider not quite "real literature" end up by seeming more ghettoized than specialized. Moreover, because they employ modes of analysis invented for high literature, they turn both of those modes as well as the works to which they are applied into unwitting parodies.

IN THE REALM of poetry, a similar division has been made between two kinds of verse: one is typically set to music and therefore customarily not read but heard by a mass audience, most of whose members think they hate poetry. The others are printed, and read as part of a classroom assignment or, if they are listened to at all, are listened to at poetry readings, which are typically organized under academic auspices in after-hour classrooms. The audience that gathers on such occasions is likely to consist largely of students, many of whom are present because their teachers have ordered them to attend.

All printed song and story, according to the new academic dispensation, is classified as "junk" or "mere entertainment," (i.e., *non*-literature), if they opt for sentimentality rather than irony, the literal rather than the symbolic, or the commonplace rather than the recherché. On the level of style and structure, prose narrative must reject not only the conventional happy ending and the Maupassant/O. Henry hook but also all undue emphasis on plot and character. Similarly, poetry must eschew end rhyme, regular meter, and stanzaic form. In the end, the institutionalized elite taste of the late 20th century regards as substandard almost everything that naive and uninstructed readers are likely to recognize as a story or poem.

But this means, in effect, the exclusion of anything which the children of such readers can comprehend, even after they enter college, without the aid of a qualified teacher. It should be clear, therefore, that whatever the origins of the definition of literature that determine the curriculum of classes in "Eng Lit," one of its functions is to guarantee opportunities for the display of exegetical skills to PhDs in literature. It is not entirely a one-way transaction, however, because what provides ego-satisfaction to certain professors also affords a chosen minority of students—hardcore English majors and fellow travelers—the sense of being initiated into a self-made, self-perpetuating aristocracy of taste. For such teachers and students, literature is totally identified with the texts—the words on the page they scrutinize together. Consequently, they have little difficulty in believing either that "the medium is the message," or that print is the ultimate medium toward which all preceding mediums represent a slow ascent, and from which all succeeding mediums represent a regrettable decline.

Therefore, any work that calls into question this article of faith by proving to be translatable into post-Gutenberg forms without loss, or even worse, with some gain of affect and authenticity, challenge the very raison d'être of professional teachers of English. This is why they find themselves at the moment defending high culture against the media, which simply means all the ways of transmitting song and story that are more generally accessible than print.

But this was not the enemy against whom we were contending when we made our entry into university departments of English. It was against our genteel predecessors and their obsolete notions of what constituted literary excellence that we sought to defend the modernist works we loved and a definition of literature that justified our taste. Though we are still defending that definition, qualified a little to allow for certain post-modernist developments, we find ourselves battling not our old academic opponents, but the mass audience, which reads best sellers and science fiction or, more often, simply watches sitcoms, cop shows, and soap operas on television—as a good many of us do.

I read the other day of a totally unreconstructed highbrow who boasted that she had never even opened a best seller and knew no one who had. But that is not a boast I can make; and I suspect that a large number of my academic colleagues, plus most of my students—sometimes openly, sometimes behind closed curtains—break their strict diet of required belles-lettres in order to satisfy their hunger for the irresponsible fantasy, shameful concupiscence, and shameful tears and laughter that are released by popular fiction. Yet we do not ordinarily face up to our hypocrisy in this regard; much less do we understand how we have been persuaded to accept a definition of literature that we are driven helplessly to betray.

UNIVERSAL schooling, I think, lies at the root of it all. Originally fought for as a right, it has long since become an obligation; subsidized by the state because it not only trains students in the vocational skills necessary to the economic well-being of us all, but also inculcates values that sustain our economy. In the immigrant society of the United States, this has involved the homogenization of diverse peoples, many of them raised in pre-industrial cultures where the Protestant work ethic was never invented. Of all courses in the standard school curriculum, English is the one most easily co-opted (and for that reason, perhaps, it remains the most widely required) into the service of the melting pot ideal: the instant WASPification and bourgeoisification of all Americans, whatever their class or ethnic origin.

Such behavior modification is continued in English classes (not maliciously, but in all goodwill) up through grade eight and on into high school, where for many years—at the suggestion of certain old-line Anglophile professors—American teenagers were required to slog their way through Scott's genteelly anti-Semitic Tory romance, *Ivanhoe*, and George Eliot's insufferably moral Victorian fable, *Silas Marner*. Nor does this process cease in English in grade 13, which, though still often required, seems somehow not quite so oppressive in a college setting, where at least guards do not prowl the halls, exit doors are not locked to prevent truancy, and it has been given the new names "Freshman Composition" or "Rhetoric I." For a while on many campuses in the late 1960s, such courses were abolished, made optional, or turned into opportunities for free expression, self-examination, and amateur therapy. But ten years later, the cry of "back to basics" went up, and in response, research papers returned to replace the journal jottings and group gropes of the 1960s.

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Thus freshman comp has once more been openly revealed as being what it never ceased covertly to be: a last desperate attempt to impose on our multilingual multidialectal population a single correct Anglo-American dialect, brainwashing us out of our various mother tongues—the demotic linguistic codes of home, street, and schoolyard. At the same time it teaches us to be ashamed of the demotic literary culture that we acquire outside the classroom. That culture includes not only pre- or extra-Gutenberg material like ball-bouncing songs, traditional prayers, riddles, limericks, jokes, parodies, and the jingles written on toilet walls; but stuff transmitted by post-Gutenberg media: popular songs, advertising slogans, the monster lore of genre movies, and the adventures—comic, heroic, or erotic—of characters on television shows. And it extends finally even to the less reputable products of the Gutenberg process itself: comic books, greeting card verse, the poetry used as filler in newspapers, pulp stories, sentimental novels, and so on.

I suspect that even now young teachers who are required to teach required comp keep telling themselves, as I did, that once they preside over upperclassmen and graduate students, they will no longer have to play the degrading role of thought police enforcing "standards"; but will be able instead, like kindly commissars, "patiently to explain," and thus to convince mature men and women to accept freely the notion that political democracy does not entail cultural leveling. That dream is not altogether delusory. After a while we preach to the converted; i.e., those who are convinced, like us, that all literature is divided into what panders to the ignorant many, and what appeals to the learned few, and that only the latter should be taught in class or preserved in libraries. Yet the overburdened taxpayers and generous alumni who make possible those classes and sustain those libraries have utterly different assumptions about the nature of literature. They demonstrate this by buying in large numbers books of which we disapprove and making smash hits of television sitcoms that we despise. Why then do they continue to subsidize not just the critical establishment but those works that it calls high art? Is it sheer hypocrisy—the tribute vice pays to virtue? Or does it reflect a need on the part of the majority to believe that what they choose to read is in some way taboo?

To be sure, occasionally legislators, school boards, and organizations of parents attempt to impose a tyranny of the majority on us all by striking from required reading lists, removing from library shelves, and even on occasion burning books that challenge reigning values. Customarily, however, they advocate censorship after-the-fact not on aesthetic grounds, but on moral or ideological ones—invoking the shibboleths of patriotism, decency, and chastity, or suggesting that certain works encourage violence or reinforce obnoxious ethnic and sexist stereotypes. Since the works they typically condemn include not only those that elitist critics consider trash—*Starsky and Hutch*, for instance, or hard pornography—but some that they prize as high art, like *Justine*, *Tropic of Cancer*, and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, such critics feel impelled to resist the bourgeois book burners on all fronts. They are untroubled by the fact that in their classrooms they seek to impose an equal and opposite tyranny of the minority—not, to be sure, by police power or vigilante action, but only by giving low grades or withholding degrees.

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A River No More: The Colorado River and the West by Philip L. Fradkin

(Knopf; $15.95)

Several kinds of people are going to be skeptical of this book or distinctly unhappy with it. Energy companies eyeing an indefinitely expanding western universe of strip mines, power plants, coal slurry lines, oil and gas wells, uranium mines, and oil shale and coal gasification plants will dispute its conclusions because their developmental projections cannot admit such deficiencies as it describes. Western boosters, real estate promoters, and mountain-states' chambers of commerce will be no less upset to have their blue-sky expectations challenged. Dam building bureaus, the local politicians who are their allies, and the water users' associations that are their chief beneficiaries will not readily accept the proposal that western water developments have a predictable end, and that the end is not far off.

By the same token, millions of ordinary Americans will find Mr. Fradkin's pessimistic estimates of western potential surprising, if not unbelievable. People from the east, midwest, and south who have had no experience with the west beyond a trip through the national parks are not likely to understand, as Mr. Fradkin does, that the west is an arid country—in the words of historian Walter Webb, "a semi-desert with a desert heart"—and that aridity conditions not only the past and present but also the future of the region. They do not comprehend the facts of life in a land of little rain, and they are likely to retain a faith in the west as the last home of youthful hope, a place where new starts, open opportunities, spaciousness, and clean air are still available, the bed where the last pillow-punching delicious minutes of the American Dream can be indulged.

Moreover, many ordinary Americans have heard the same word that has brought great corporations flocking to Denver and Salt Lake City: the statistics on energy resources in the mountain states; the statistics on the phenomenal growth of Sun Belt cities such as Tucson, Phoenix, Albuquerque, and Las Vegas; the rumors of what wages construction workers make in the Wyoming towns of Rock Springs and Evanston; and the profits that are ready to be plucked from western lands that are still mainly federally owned. They have heard Mr. Reagan on the subject of good old-fashioned American self-reliance and initiative that once made this country great. They have heard echoes of Secretary Watt's promise to "open up" the public lands to resource development for the benefit of the whole nation.

In other words, the west, which was always a land of illusion, is still a land of illusion. What Mr. Fradkin's book does is look illusion in the eye until it blinks.

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A River No More makes a statement of the utmost importance and gravity. Though it focuses on the Colorado River and its tributaries, the book's implications reach from the high plains of Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico to the Pacific littoral; from federal land and water policies to the survival strategies of the ranches, farms, country towns, and small regional capitals that constitute the west's only permanent and renewable way of life. Developed in times when remoteness was an economic disadvantage, and limited by a water supply that will service only about 20 percent of the land, the capitals are now heading into a period in which overdevelopment could turn them into sacrifice areas, and destroy the good but limited life that natives have found satisfying and that tourists have come a long way to try.

This is the most comprehensive book there is about the Colorado River. Probably the most written-about river in America, the Colorado has an importance out of proportion to its absolute flow. Discovered before the Mississippi, it was not fully explored until Major John Wesley Powell went down it in 1869. It has been a pathway of adventure from that time till the present, when the National Park Service must limit the numbers of people who go down it every year by raft or dory. It has been treated extensively as spectacle and geological wonder, has tempted painters and photographers, has been the consistent centerpiece in USIS and travel offices abroad, has become a must for European and Japanese travelers in America.

It is also—something not all Americans realize—the most harnessed and used river on the American continent. Originating in the high mountain country of Colorado and Wyoming, it flows through progressively bleaker deserts to the Gulf of California. Beginning with its highest feeder streams, its waters are dammed, diverted onto fields, rechanneled, dammed again and used again, reassembled, dammed again, re-used. By the time the Colorado River dies in the sand miles from the Gulf (it no longer has a mouth, but simply expires, as the Humboldt and Carson Rivers expire in Great Basin sinks), its waters have been used to irrigate 100 valleys, have powered turbines at Glen Canyon and Boulder and other dams, have been stocked and re-stocked with trout and bass, have watered lawns and flushed driveways and filled swimming

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pools in Los Angeles, have converted the Coachella and Imperial Valleys from deserts into gardens. The last million and a half acre-feet of water, so saline by the time they reach the Mexican border that they would poison any fields they were turned into, are run through a desalinization plant before being flumed on south to fulfill our water contract with Mexico.

In an attempt to comprehend the total significance of the Colorado, Mr. Fradkin has followed it from the uppermost headwaters of its four major tributaries, the Colorado (formerly the Grand), the Green, the San Juan, and the Gila. He has walked its mountain feeders, run its canyons by boat several times, and paddled a kayak down its lower reaches to its silt-choked dying-place in the Colorado Desert of California. He has consulted the ranchers, Indians, Mormons, irrigators, Los Angeles suburbanites, and Imperial Valley growers who live by it. He has talked to dam-building bureaucrats and operators of hydropower plants, feds, and locals. He has read history and fought his way through the entangled politics of water development and held a wet finger to the winds of the future.

Out of years of study he has brought forth conclusions that are simple in their basis but complex in their implications, conclusions that amplify and extend the conclusions that Major Powell reached over 100 years ago. There is not enough water in the west for all the things people plan to do there. There is not even enough for the things that already are being done there. The west, despite its deceptive openness, is overpopulated. Every river in it is oversubscribed, perhaps not so drastically as the Colorado, but over-subscribed nevertheless. When Powell told an Irrigation Congress in Los Angeles in 1893 that its booster policies were breeding future trouble, because there was not enough water for the land, he was thinking in agricultural terms. But if there is not enough water for more than 20 percent of the land, and if that water is already nearing maximum use, then there is not enough water for expanding cities, coal-fired power plants of enormous size, synfuel plants that use up a barrel of water for every barrel of oil they produce. You cannot invent water; you can only hold it back, redistribute it, and sometimes recycle it. And that process of holding back and redistributing, which has remade considerable portions of the west since the Reclamation Act of 1902, is, according to Mr. Fradkin, nearing its end.

The event he uses to dramatize the coming change is President Carter's attempt in 1977 to kill a hit list of western water projects, four of them in the Colorado River basin. That act, a political blunder, was actually a sensible acknowledgment that western water projects have passed the point at which they can be justified by any cost-benefit ratio. One of the dams on Carter's hit list would have watered no more than 60 ranches. Nevertheless, the politicians of the entire west, Republican and Democrat, rose up in outrage at the suggestion that the federal government was getting tired of building increasingly expensive dams at the expense of the whole nation's taxpayers for the benefit of limited areas of the west. To westerners, water is life. To western politicians, an indefinite extension of water projects is political life, and will continue to be so until the west runs out of streams. The Colorado, Mr. Fradkin suggests, is an index of the future.

What is more, even those water projects already in place are not to be counted on forever. The predicted life for a dam on the silt-heavy Colorado is about 100 years—and Boulder Dam was completed in the 1930s. Upstream dams cut off the flow of silt for a while, and dams will die from the upper river down, but they all will die sooner or later, as the dams of the Tigris-Euphrates and the Indus died. Canals will silt up as the canals of the Hohokam in the southwest silted up. Fields will flower with alkali salts brought up by evaporating irrigation water, and when fresh water is not available to leach the fields, the fields will have to be abandoned, as they have had to be abandoned in the Wellton-Mohawk district on the Gila. In many western valleys,

THE VETERAN

Once it was hard to believe
That the birds I watched for hours,
Darting and perching, had no opinion
About me, and would have none.
Now I'm tranquil even if my city,
Known far longer, doesn't look my way.

If my strengths and weaknesses aren't needed here,
I can imagine a city where they are.
Here the people may contend I haven't done enough
To free the light from the dark of history.
But there they say I'm helping
Even as I sleep, like the sleeping
Oblivious trees where the birds are singing.

If the mercy of the angels I dreamed of yesterday
Long ago ran out, if I used it up,
Today I dream of angels with an endless supply.
It's their vocation to come up with it;
It's a challenge they run to meet;
It's how they enjoy themselves.

I was knocking at my own door yesterday;
I was looking in the window, wondering
Who could live in this small room,
So plain and empty. Today I stand inside
And look out, mindful of the trees,
The birds, the planet.

If I can't tell what will happen
It's because I'm free. The birds
Will sing their song for ever.
They'll always be birds. They can't stop.
I could forget myself in a minute
Even now if I stopped dreaming.

Carl Dennis

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too, pumps have for years been drawing up the ground water and lowering the water table. Sooner or later that has to end, for that is the ultimate bank account. Tucson is looking at that problem, the Central Valley of California is looking at it, the city of San Jose has sunk several feet because of the pumping of ground water and subsidence of the land.

All this means only one thing: the arid west cannot count on a continued population and development boom. Any water used for that boom will have to come out of some previous users, generally agricultural. That is why energy companies are already buying up ranches in Wyoming and Colorado, not because they want land but because with the land they acquire water rights that can be held for future use in energy development. That is why, privately, politicians who would not dare make the same statement aloud will admit that the Central Arizona Project and the Bonneville element of the Central Utah Project are counting on water that the Colorado River does not contain. That is why boosters invoke such cosmic boondoggles as the scheme to fill the Colorado's dams with water from the Columbia (which the Northwest is not going to give them), or the even more cosmic scheme to bring water down from the east face of the Canadian Rockies and spread it by a system of Martian canals through the upper midwest and as far down as Los Angeles.

The boosters should read with care every chapter of *A River No More*. Great expectations, whether individual, corporate, or federal, cannot be built on sand, especially when the sand is dry. As Mr. Fradkin points out, most irrigation civilizations have ultimately destroyed themselves. The exception is Egypt, and Egypt benefited, until the building of the Aswan Dam, from the annual leaching and fertilizing of the Nile flood. Harnessed rivers do not benefit in that way. And as Mr. Fradkin further says,

> The policies and laws that determine where water goes mean life itself in this dry region—not only life but death, as the river has been depleted to serve the lands and people surrounding it. This oasis civilization will ultimately face that same process of withering when shortages occur in western water supplies in coming years. . . . For too long, a narrow group of men has distributed the ultimate source of wealth in the West with diminishing wisdom.

And note: the Reagan budget, which proposes cuts in almost every federal activity, is not designed to hurt western water projects. And the policies of James Watt as secretary of the interior propose maximum development of western mineral and energy resources, but say nothing about where the water is to come from or how the life of western towns and ranches is to be sustained when the new western industry has taken the water that western watersheds (now under threat from every corporate constituency that Mr. Watt serves) annually provide.

Wallace Stegner

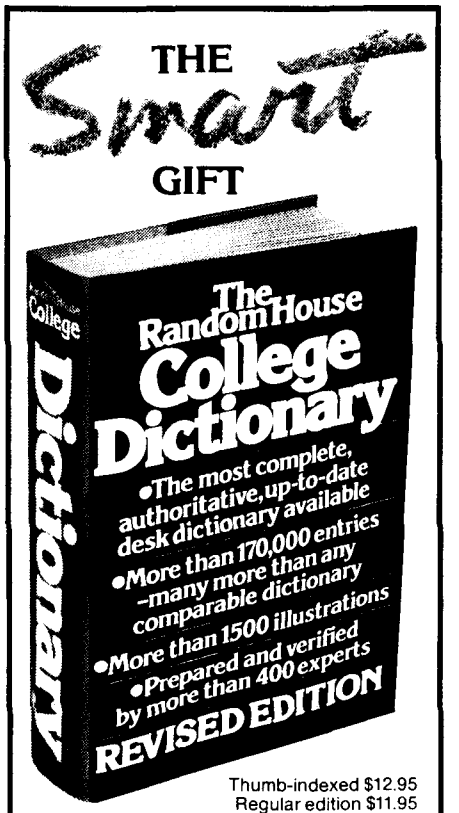
Wallace Stegner, the novelist, is the author of *Recapitulation* (Doubleday).

China Hand

Borodin: Stalin's Man in China
by Dan N. Jacobs

(Harvard University Press; $25)

When volume seven of the first edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* was sent to the printers on August 31, 1927, it contained a laudatory article about Mikhail Markevich Gruzenberg, better known under his party *klichka* of Borodin. Borodin was described as the "High Advisor" (the English term was used) of the Central Committee of the Chinese Kuomintang, engaged in "fervently" strengthening China's national-revolutionary party. The article quoted Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the founder of the Kuomintang, declaring in a speech in Canton on November 25, 1924: "In order to learn from the Russian revolutionaries I invited Comrad Borodin to become the *Sovetnik* [counselor] of our Party. Comrade Borodin has had great experience in Party work and I hope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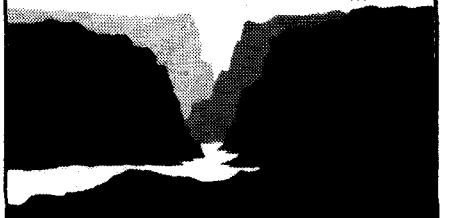
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that you will also learn from him."

At the precise moment volume seven went to the printers with this possibly apocryphal quotation (the date is clearly wrong; Dr. Sun had left Canton by ship for Shanghai on November 14) Borodin was fleeing China for his life. With a handful of Russian aides, the radical American writer Anna Louise Strong, Dr. Sun's foreign minister, and Eugene Chen's two sons, he had reached the remote northwest border town of Ningsia, where he was assembling a camel train. He hoped to get across the Gobi desert to the shelter of Russian-held Mongolia without being killed or taken prisoner by the Chinese. Borodin's mission to China, his role as "High Advisor" to Dr. Sun and the Chinese Revolution, had gone up in flames. Stalin had just "lost" China to Chiang Kai-shek 20 years before America was to "lose" China to Mao Zedung.

Professor Dan Jacobs's reexamination of Borodin, whom he rightly calls "Stalin's man in China," and Russian "revolutionary" policy is timely because this was the most dramatic instance of Moscow's intervention in the political affairs of a major country. Understanding why Borodin, Stalin, and Russia failed sheds light on an inherent contradiction within Soviet policy which makes nonsense of Marxist revolutionary ideology. The truth is that although Borodin preached in words of revolution and only thinly disguised Marxism, the essence of what he proposed was pragmatically attached to Stalin's personal political necessities in Moscow and, to a lesser extent, to Russian national policy.

In the Soviet Union Borodin's name all but vanished with his return to Moscow in 1927, even before it began to be widely known in the West as a tragic symbol of the failed China Revolution—a romantic image painted 46 years ago by Vincent Sheean in *Personal History*. Borodin and most of his associates disappeared in successive Stalinist purges; the first, in the early 1930s, was followed by the executions touched off by the Stalin-contrived assassination of Sergei Kirov on December 1, 1934. One purge after another wiped out almost all Soviet expertise in Far Eastern affairs; there was even a mini-purge as late as 1969. Fifty-three years passed before Borodin's name again appeared in the Soviet encyclopedia.

Borodin's fate is an example not merely of the failure of a man, a mission, and a myth, but of the failure of the Marxist fiction of the universality of revolutionary principle and technique. If so skilled an operative as Borodin could not succeed with such flammable material as the China of the mid-1920s, can we wonder that the Comintern's results in other venues proved so barren?

Chiang Kai-shek and staff, 1926. Far left, Borodin; second from right, Chiang Kai-shek. Photo from book.

The Borodin gambit had its origin in the trauma of the early Bolshevik days. Lenin's interest in Dr. Sun Yat-sen and his faltering Chinese Revolution had been peripheral; China attracted his attention only when hopes for the big casino of European revolution began to fade. To encourage his followers (and possibly himself) Lenin began to make speeches about the great stirrings of the "toilers of the East." The East was hardly Germany but it provided diversion in a landscape barren of promise. Just as he had tried to encourage his followers by announcing a grandiose plan for electrification of all Russia at a moment when kerosene for lamps could not be bought in the Moscow stores, so Lenin raised a vision of a revolutionary East when hope for a revolutionary West had flickered out.

Lenin did not live to do much about China except turn the fledgling Comintern apparatus in that direction. He made a start at revising the unequal treaties imposed on China by the czars but never returned to China anything Russia had taken away. Russian territorial aggrandizement remains a source of Sino-Soviet hostility to this day.

In the summer of 1923, when Lenin was incapacitated by a stroke, the Comintern decided to send an experienced operative, military advisers, and military supplies to Canton—provided Dr. Sun managed to regain control there. It was a case of the halt helping the lame.

Dr. Sun, although more sorely beset than the Bolsheviks, regained precarious control and welcomed the idea. Borodin, born in the Pale (a Jewish settlement in Russia) and brought up in Riga, was a shrewd agent and an early Bolshevik who took refuge in Chicago after the failed 1905 revolution; he got the assignment. Although Borodin knew nothing of China, he had an eclectic mind, practical abilities, experience in dangerous missions, and had acquired street wisdom in a rough-and-tumble career in Chicago where he had set up language and trade schools with considerable success. He was a good businessman, so good that he almost didn't return to Russia after November 7, 1917. He knew English, a valuable asset, and may have met Dr. Sun in passing in Chicago before World War I. Dr. Sun spoke English. So did many of his colleagues, including his foreign minister, Eugene Chen, who, in fact, knew no Chinese. There was one exception: Chiang Kai-shek, Dr. Sun's brilliant young military protégé, spoke no English.

Jacobs has not established whether Borodin met with Stalin before leaving for Canton. Though it may well be impossible to discover if a meeting occurred, it seems likely, for Borodin proceeded to serve as Stalin's faithful

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instrument. After reaching Canton in 1923, he swiftly demonstrated his abilities to Dr. Sun, with whom he soon was working smoothly and effectively. Borodin managed with some difficulty to get the weak and quarrelsome Chinese Communist party to support Dr. Sun and constantly stressed the virtue of better military training and political indoctrination of the military cadres.

But the ground began to shift under Borodin's feet. The deadly duel for control of the Soviet party rapidly escalated: Stalin versus Trotsky, Stalin versus Kamenev and Zinoviev, Stalin versus Bukharin. Stalin's reputation, such as it was outside the narrow party bureaucracy, lay in domestic matters. He needed a foreign policy ace to trump Trotsky, to trump the others, all more sophisticated than he with their European training and languages.

If Borodin had little knowledge of China, Stalin surely had less. But he knew what he wanted and what he needed. By January 1924 Lenin was dead. By March 1925 Sun Yat-sen was dead. Russian policy toward China was going to be shaped by Stalin and by Stalin's needs. Jacobs's opening lines proclaim Borodin "the Bolshevik conqueror of half of China," a bit of gusty rhetoric which never was true. During Dr. Sun's life Borodin did steady the often precarious position of Dr. Sun through sound guidance, an open purse, first-class military advisers, headed by Marshal Vasily K. Blyukher (also known as Galin, who was shot by Stalin in 1938). Again and again Borodin succeeded in delaying an impetuous Kuomintang expedition to the north which he feared was beyond its strength.

When Dr. Sun died on March 12, 1925, common sense and the national interests of both Russia and China dictated a pause for reflection. Dr. Sun had no successor, and Borodin's strength flowed through the person of Dr. Sun. Without a leader equally prepared to accept Borodin as *sovetnik*, the game would be chancy at best. But Stalin could not wait; he needed to play his China card right away in order to validate his command of foreign policy. If Borodin could engineer the China Revolution, if the much debated northern expedition could be mounted and China united under Kuomintang rule with Borodin as counselor, what a triumph for Stalin! What a black eye for Trotsky!

From this moment, as Jacobs makes clear, Moscow politics took command. Borodin's tactics and strategy became dictated not by Chinese interests, not by the dynamics of the Chinese Revolution or even by long-range Russian interests, but by the urgent needs of a Russian politician engaged in a life-and-death power struggle.

The rest followed inevitably. Could Borodin have made a pact with Chiang Kai-shek? Quite possibly. Chiang had spent time in Moscow, was cozened, flattered, instructed, given large doses of communist ideology. He had left his young son to be Moscow-educated and Moscow-trained. It was not impossible to imagine a scenario in which Chiang Kai-shek would ride to power with Borodin and Stalin as his backers. But Stalin misjudged Chiang and so did Borodin—for Russian and possibly Marxist reasons, not Chinese ones. They did not understand that whatever kind of revolution was going on in China, it was bound to be a *Chinese* revolution, not a Russian one, made by Chinese, not Russians, no matter how good Borodin's advice. Chiang was as Chinese as Stalin, the acclimatized Georgian, was Russian. Chiang looked at things from his own viewpoint, and it was a Chinese viewpoint. Borodin never quite understood him. Nor did Stalin, although later he demonstrated time and again that he preferred Chiang to Mao Zedung.

The failure of Stalin's and Borodin's policy had been evident since Chiang Kai-shek's uprising against the Communists in Canton in early 1926. But unwilling to relinquish the China card, Stalin and Borodin gambled that, even after Canton, Chiang would not oust the Russians. And they lost in 1927 when Chiang savagely struck against the Communists again and Borodin and the rest had to flee for their lives. Not all of them made it.

Stalin learned a lesson from all this: he never again trusted any revolutionary force in China. In the 1930s he sent some survivors of the Borodin era back to China but not to the Communists. Their mission was to help Chiang Kai-shek in the era of the "united front" against Japan. Stalin's agents tried their best to take over the Chinese Communist party and turn it into Stalin's tool. When they failed and Mao triumphed in 1934, no more help went to the Chinese Communists. At the end of World War II, Stalin was still in Chiang Kai-shek's camp, urging Mao to join Chiang in a coalition as a junior partner. Mao rejected Stalin's advice, defeated Chiang, and took power, initiating an era of

Bertolt Brecht in America

James K. Lyon

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extremely uneasy relations between China and Russia which culminated in the enduring break of 1958-59.

As far as foreign countries were concerned, Stalin gave up the revolutionary Comintern process. In pre-Hitlerite Germany he played not for the triumph of German Communists, which might have established a rival to the Soviet party, but for the destruction of both the Communist party and the Social Democrats. Then he tried to deal with and outwit a man of his own kind, Hitler. He destroyed most of the Comintern leadership in the purges along with most of the foreign Communist party leaders who chanced to be in Moscow. In World War II and the postwar era Stalin didn't bother with revolutionary nonsense. He sent the Red Army into Eastern Europe and brought about his "revolutions" at bayonet point. Then in 1948-51 he destroyed another generation of East European Communist leadership and began to rely entirely on the Soviet armed forces and the secret police.

Of course Moscow still trumpeted the old Marxist calls to the workers of the world to rise and throw off their chains, but the Kremlin didn't pretend to believe in the worn-out rhetoric, much less act in accordance with it. To Stalin, revolution was too important an affair to be left in the hands of revolutionaries. Better trust the army and the policemen.

PERHAPS, all in all, it would have been better had Borodin not gotten across the dangerous Gobi. Then no doubt he would have become a revolutionary legend. Instead, he sat in the Metropol hotel for two or three years while party hacks armed with scalpels conducted a protracted postmortem on his conduct. He was compelled to abandon the China field entirely. But for a time he escaped the fate of many of his comrades. Stalin gave him the Order of the Red Banner of Labor, perhaps so that he could continue to argue that his China policy had been a success. However, Borodin never had another job of consequence. He was put to work on the English language newspaper, *Moscow News*, where he spent his remaining years, luckier than most of his China associates. Stalin's purge of old China hands was far more severe than America's in the McCarthy era. Stalin repaid his men and women with bullets in the head and death sentences in the camps.

Borodin's time finally came in the first week of 1949. Then he and the staff of *Moscow News* were arrested. Borodin was not under any illusion about Stalin. He had known for many years what lay in store for him. Perhaps it is my imagination, but when I met Borodin in Moscow during World War II his gloomy mien was like that of a man who lives with the knowledge that he has a fatal disease. He was shipped out to a labor camp near Yakutsk above the Arctic Circle to die in 1951. I was in Moscow at the time, and on September 1, 1953, a friend asked me whether I didn't think Borodin deserved an obituary in the *New York Times*. Certainly, I said, is he dead? My friend told me he had died not long ago. The Chinese sent a plea to Moscow to save his life but the Russians rejected it. He died, the posthumous acknowledgment indicated, on May 29, 1951, at the age of 63. In my cable I said Borodin's death had become known "belatedly." The censor deleted that word, perhaps taking the view that a two-year delay in announcing the death of an old revolutionary was not unusual in the age of Stalin.

Many people, including me, remember Borodin as a tall, imposing man, but photographs belie our impression. He was of medium height, about five feet eight or nine. Perhaps it was his reputation that distorted our image. If so, Moscow and Beijing have since taken care of that renown. Both agree on one thing today—that Borodin played a minor and essentially mistaken role in his glory days.

Harrison Salisbury

Harrison Salisbury's most recent book is *Without Fear or Favor* (Times Books). He is a specialist on Russia and China.

Elegant Entertainment

Loitering With Intent
by Muriel Spark

(Coward, McCann & Geoghegan; $12.95)

It is singularly appropriate—a classic instance of "the shock of recognition"—that Evelyn Waugh should have been one of the first to recognize the qualities that have distinguished the novels of Muriel Spark from *The Comforters* onward: their wit and elegance and inventiveness, and that streak of fantasy or the fantastic that reminds us that the true progenitor of the tradition of the English comic novel is Lewis Carroll. *The Comforters*, which Waugh thought "brilliantly original and fascinating," appeared in 1957. In 1959 came *Memento Mori*; in 1960, a true *annus mirabilis* for Mrs. Spark, *The Bachelors* and *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*. She sent a copy of the former to Waugh, who wrote to thank her in these words:

> How do you do it? I am dazzled by *The Bachelors*. Most novelists find there is one kind of book they can write (particularly humorous novelists) and go on doing it with variations until death. You seem to have an inexhaustible source. *Bachelors* is the cleverest and most elegant of all your clever and elegant books. I have no idea how wide your success has been up to date. I suspect that you are still the sort of writer whom people rejoice to introduce to their friends. [As Waugh himself had done with *The Comforters*.] *Bachelors* should take you clear through that phase into full fame. May you enjoy.

Waugh, than whom no better qualified reader for Mrs. Spark could be imagined, proved a shrewd prophet. In rapid succession came *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* and *The Girls of Slender Means*, and Mrs. Spark had her fame—which I'm sure she has enjoyed without being in the least taken in by it—and, save for a few dry periods, the source has proved to be inexhaustible.

If Waugh were alive, I suspect he would read *Loitering With Intent* with as much pleasure as the early work that so dazzled him. Certainly it is one of Mrs. Spark's very best novels—funny and clever and surprising—and seems assured of a place alongside *Memento Mori* and *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. At the very least, it is the elegant entertainment of the year, and for that, in a time when elegance like intelligence is in painfully short supply, we can only be grateful.

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Loitering With Intent is autobiographical in form. From the vantage point of the present, Fleur Talbot, an established writer, looks back to 1949 in London, when she was living in "a bed-sitting room with a gas fire and a gas ring operated by pre-decimal pennies and shillings in the slot" and writing her first novel. Meanwhile, she supported herself by working as secretary for the very odd Sir Quentin Oliver, the founder of the Autobiographical Association, an organization as odd as himself, and a treasure trove of future material for a budding author aware, as Fleur was, of "a *daemon* inside me that rejoiced in seeing people as they were, and not only that, but more than ever as they were, and more, and more."

How "autobiographical" this autobiographical novel actually is is the secret of Mrs. Spark and her *daemon*. But the tone, manner, and voice in which Fleur writes is unmistakably "Sparkian." Of her name she tells us,

> Fleur was the name hazardously bestowed at birth, as always in these cases before they know what you are going to turn out like. Not that I looked too bad, it was only that Fleur wasn't the right name, and yet it was mine as are the names of those melancholy Joys, those timid Victors, the inglorious Glorias and materialistic Angelas one is bound to meet in the course of a long life of change and infiltration; and I once met a Lancelot who, I assure you, had nothing to do with chivalry.

Please note the word "infiltration," not at all the word one might expect in such a passage and yet how precisely it describes Fleur's activities in the Autobiographical Association, where she is thought "rather mad, if not evil."

In fact, she is neither: she is, quite simply, a writer loitering there with the intent (consciously or not) to store up as much material as possible. The jest—the gist?—of the novel, whose marvelously intricate plot I have no intention of summarizing, is that the material of fiction (the novel that Fleur is writing) seems to be anticipating the material of life (the activities of the Autobiographical Association) and the confusion between the two becomes increasingly comic and sinister.

Mrs. Spark has an invincible, very English distaste for the Great Statements that American humorists are so fond of: how else can they assert their claim to be serious, not merely funny? I must admit to a preference for Mrs. Spark's and Evelyn Waugh's way: no

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heaving and sweating, but the coolness and ease that come with doing something superlatively with seemingly no effort, as though by right. Offhand, in a time when the new (or do I mean *nouveaux*?) critics are nagging at the relations of art to life in a style that is torturous to read, if not incomprehensible, Mrs. Spark's quiet, mischievous, hilarious, and truly serious treatment of the question is irresistible. No wonder that Fleur, who thinks, "How wonderful it feels to be an artist and a woman in the twentieth century," should go on her way rejoicing.

It is difficult to imagine the reader who won't rejoice in *Loitering With Intent*. But on second thought, I fear I know precisely those who would do well to keep their distance from it: the priggish, the pompous, the humorless, the unyieldingly solemn. It is more pleasant, however, to think of the rest of us whom Mrs. Spark will send on our ways rejoicing.

William Abrahams

William Abrahams is the editor most recently of *Prize Stories 1981: The O. Henry Awards* (Doubleday).

Make-Out Artist

Singled Out: A Civilized Guide to Sex and Sensibility for the Suddenly Single Man—or Woman by Richard Schickel

(Viking; $9.95)

In *Singled Out: A Civilized Guide to Sex and Sensibility . . .*, critic Richard Schickel squeezes into sandals and faded jeans, vainly trying to pass himself off as one of the boys. Expanded from an article originally published in *Esquire*, *Singled Out* is a winking, confiding, slap-on-the-back pep talk on how to dart and flit unscathed along the reefs of bachelorhood. Flimsy chapters take a gliding look at one-night stands, the sort of women to flee from and pursue, the gentlest ways of extricating oneself from a stifling affair, the tingling delights of adultery and other forms of slyly discreet tomcatting. Usually such how-to books are written by hack pop-psychologists hoping to make a handsome kill. Schickel, however, is a writer of some standing. He's knocked off a novel (*Another I, Another You*), currently reviews movies for *Time*, and has published several books on film, the best of them a biographical meditation on Douglas Fairbanks Sr. titled *His Picture in the Papers*. When his *Esquire* article made a gratifying splash ("In something over a quarter of a century of writing nothing I've done—no book, no article, no TV show—has elicited the response that that piece did"), Schickel must have heard the ringing of cash registers summoning him on like chapel bells. Indeed, the book has already been handsomely hailed by the *Time*'s Anatole Broyard as our age's answer to *The Art of Courtly Love*. As *His Picture in the Papers* displayed, Schickel is capable of writing with elegance and zest, but in *Singled Out* he's gone slumming, grimly determined to cobble a best seller.

Schickel's slumming comes through most coarsely in a chapterette on romantic gestures. Make the effort to leave your ladylove aswoon, Schickel coaches; extravagant boldness can win over a wavering heart.

> But there's another reason to go to all that trouble, and it has nothing to do with overwhelming your lady love. It has to do with the way you look at yourself. By which I mean that if, like most of us, you've spent most of your life routinely getting and spending, paying the school bills and keeping the orthodonist at bay, and generally being a sober and reliable citizen, you probably have a fairly dull image of yourself. A plodder. A guy who's bought too many of his clothes at the semi-annual sales and ordered out to the deli for too many lunches at his desk. . . .

Now, I'm not on bantering terms with Mr. Schickel—I saw him getting into an elevator once, pushing the "down" button with firm resolve—but I can't imagine him parked behind his desk, wolfing down pastrami as dabs of mustard spot his lime-green slacks. Schickel assumes his readership consists of plodders, but I can't believe he fancies himself that way; he occupies too high a nest in the Manhattan media-world to make such coy self-deprecation convincing. Elsewhere Schickel tells men looking for dates that there are always kindly women within reach. For example: " . . . Herb's secretary over at Acme Nut & Bolt—the one who slips you onto his calendar even though you didn't call three days in advance for an appointment." There's a keen sliver of condescension in that sentence: you can't imagine Schickel himself dallying with Herb's secretary, or (as he alludes in another chapter) sacking down with some chippie at the annual Pig Iron Convention. Wearing a friendly grin, Schickel keeps trying to act like just another barfly, addressing the reader in the chummiest of terms ("fella," "sport," even "you poor, dumb, horny bastard"), but his sense of superiority keeps peeping through. He himself seems anxiously aware that his tone isn't quite right. In his preface, Schickel describes the style of *Singled Out* as "colloquial-literate, I guess—I hope. . . ."

Colloquial-lackadaisical is closer to the mark. There's really no excuse for someone who's been writing over a quarter of a century to begin a sentence as carelessly as this: "Somebody, I think it was Jung, said that. . . ." (Were Schickel writing for *Time*, he would have taken the trouble to pin down the quotation.) It's also too dear and darling to preen, "As the Howard Cosell of the sexual arena, I merely tell it like it is. And suggest that if pair-bonding (funny how infectious the vulgarisms of pseudo-science are) turns out not to be your bag," etc., etc. Combing through *Singled Out*, I noticed that the Howard Cosell of grope-and-groan used a certain word in paragraph after paragraph, a word one usually doesn't associate with daring candor. The word?: "nice." Schickel keeps referring to nice notes, nice smiles, nice women, nice *frissons*, a nice romantic glow, "kinda" nice relationships. "Nice" is such a patronizing nothing of a word that it betrays Schickel's snobby scorn for those revelers at the Pig Iron Convention who prize his counsel. It betrays something more. "Nice" is used so frequently that it becomes a sarcastic dig, a stab of sour irony. For the dating world depicted by Schickel is far from nice; it's a nasty cockpit where one is clawed and pecked until the combatants limp away, feath-

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ers speckled with blood. Beneath the sheen of Schickel's niceness, resentments brood and breed.

Of this, Schickel seems unaware. In his preface, he urges us to ease each other through life with "consideration and gentleness—just plain common decency. . . ." Despite such tender sentiments, despite Anatole Broyard's courtly comparison, chivalry doesn't rise like a gleaming sword from the pages of *Singled Out*. Schickel can't write about those vying for a woman's affection without a sneer creasing his voice. He refers to one of his former rivals as "a permanent failure," another as "a total asshole," and the knowledge that women have preferred such losers to *him* sticks like a thorn in his paw.

Not surprisingly, Schickel thinks little of the ladies who consort with such low rabble; indeed, he sizes up all women with a harsh, cold squint. Schickel advises men recently divorced to seek out a Transitional Woman, some obliging cupcake who can sweeten the shift from the connubial past to the solitary future. Once the TW has been discarded, the Suddenly Single Man can scan the horizon for something more stable. Schickel's advice: never get involved with a woman who's not working. "And I mean seriously working—ditsy little part-time jobs in art galleries don't count." (Not to him, they don't.) He then classifies women chronologically. "Now there are nice women available in every age group, but I've found that for a man in his forties, women passing through the odd-numbered decades are likely to prove most satisfactory." Women in their 20s are too vague and uninformed, women in their 40s too "edgy" and "stiffish." Women in their 30s, however, pass Schickel's taste test: " . . . by and large you can ask them a direct question and get a direct response, no arm wrestling on the couch, no moral debates, plenty of oral sex." In other words, women should employ their mouths to accommodate Schickel's frisky manhood, not trifle away his time with talk, talk, talk.

Schickel acknowledges that there are limits and drawbacks to being such an accomplished sex-pirate. Limits? "One caution, otherwise known as Poor Richard's Theorem: Achievement will get you laid, but it won't get you loved." The drawbacks are a bit more gritty. "Crabs, for example, are funny enough when they happen to somebody else, but the joke tends to wear a little thin when you're the guy with all your bed linen in the laundry and most of your nice clothes in for a dry cleaning." With all the griefs and embarrassments single life offers, everything eventually ends up even Stephen, however. "[A] rough justice does pertain over the long run: overall, you can count on getting screwed about as often as you get to do the screwing." As you read such pithies, keep in mind that this—this!—is the book Anatole Broyard has compared to Andreas Capelanus's *The Art of Courtly Love*. If so, it's been a long dismal slide since the Middle Ages, all that was silver having turned to rust.

If *Singled Out* is a dubious piece of pillow talk, it does fulfill one function: it gives us a memorable glimpse into Richard Schickel's ring-a-dingy lifestyle. I've read Schickel for years in *Time*, and it never occurred to me that lurking behind that blasé prose was a hepcat, a crouching, prowling panther of desire. He's like Jerry Lewis's Buddy Love in *The Nutty Professor*, insolently stabbing out cigarettes between soulful kisses. In one chapter, Schickel describes a necking session out west with a woman who later invites him to take a look at her succulents ("She has a cactus garden, but she is no stranger to metaphor"). A bit later, he mentions French kissing some tease in a Chinese restaurant. Imagine, just as you're about to tuck into a bit of chicken and rice, lewd smacking noices from the next table make you drop your fork: Schickel and his date going at it beneath a paper lantern. Schickel is always in a hurry; he has no truck with flirty niceties. "Talking a blue streak, fumbling at this and that clothes fastener, I hustled her toward the stairs that led to the bedroom," he writes of one brief encounter. Once he gets between the sheets, however, he likes to linger. "At the risk of sounding sentimental, I just want to say that, to me, a woman's body is one of the miracles of creation, and that the most miraculous thing about being invited into a woman's bed [invited?—he practically heaves them into the sack] is that she is permitting you voyage—to touch, to taste, to look, to smell." Sort of gives you the shudders, doesn't it?

By the end of *Singled Out*, the kissing bandit has hung up his spurs and saddle. Schickel informs us that he's fallen in love—with an actress—and the writing suddenly turns sugary-sublime. "Why, a full moon lit our path up the glen to the place where the waterfall begins its rush into the stream below." All those impatient tussles on the couch

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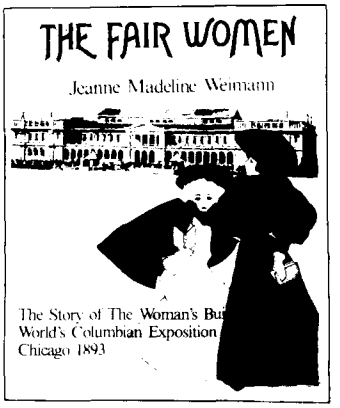
THE FAIR WOMEN

by Jeanne Weimann
Introduction by Anita Miller



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served him well, Schickel reflects. Without such bumps and dips, Schickel wouldn't have possessed "the cunning to pursue her—if I may say so myself—as artfully as I did." And that is where *Singled Out* ends, with Richard Schickel basking in the glory of conquest triumphant, pondering the splendors of "the wondering heart." So out on the veranda Schickel sits, idly strumming a banjo as the moon blows him kisses. The wind lightly fingers his hair. When he stands, the zipper teeth of his trousers smile with manly pride, knowing that they house greatness. By day Richard Schickel may be just another movie reviewer, but by night he strides our planet as the God of Love, bestowing *Singled Out* upon us as his gift of wisdom. We poor muddled mortals can only glance up with admiration, then shuffle off to our cubicles at Acme Nut & Bolt, where Herb's secretary is cracking away at a fresh wad of gum.

James Wolcott

James Wolcott contributes regularly to *Esquire* and the *New York Review of Books*.

Mysteries

Sometimes paperback reprinting is an act of homage to a careful craftsman now little read. This is surely the case with the six reprints of the mysteries of Phoebe Atwood Taylor, all brought out recently by the Foul Play Press, an offshoot of The Countryman Press in Woodstock, Vermont. Four of these are Asey Mayo mysteries: *Figure Away* ($4.50), *Octagon House* ($4.50), *The Six Iron Spiders* ($4.95), and *Proof of the Pudding* ($4.95), published originally between 1937 and 1945. Two are Leonidas Witherall mysteries: *The Cut Direct* ($4.50) and *Cold Steal* ($4.95), written by "Alice Tilton" in 1938-39. All these books are fun, some verge on a quiet black humor, and all contain traditionally constructed mysteries. Each of the reprints features a cover photograph of a living figure well known to the world of mystery fans, done to death by knife, pickax, or skillet, so that if one is so inclined one may adorn a coffee table with a prostrate Carol Brener, Dilys Winn, Edward Gorey, Otto Penzler, et al. The effect is of inside jokes.

The Foul Play Press is also reprinting Stanley Ellin. One wonders that these were allowed to go out of print, since Ellin's recent work has been very favorably reviewed. One of the reprints, *The Key to Nicholas Street* ($4.95), is regarded as a classic by those who follow the genre, and *The Eighth Circle* ($4.95) is a serious attempt to write about a private detective as a person engaged in a trade rather than as a spokesman for the author's private philosophy or as a vehicle for tough-sounding witticisms. Ellin does not need to be rediscovered, but those who know him by his somewhat less serious and most recent work—*The Luxembourg Run* and *Star Light, Star Bright*, for example—or who think of him in connection with his famous short stories, "The Speciality of the House" and "The Blessington Method," would find Ellin to be a serious novelist (*The Winter After This Summer*) and a skillful writer of thrillers (*The Panama Portrait*) if they were to ferret out these reprints.

Then there are those authors we get to know only after they have already developed a persona. One such is Joseph Hansen, whose series of California inquiries into the life of an insurance investigator, Dave Brandstetter, who happens to be a homosexual, are being reprinted in succession by Holt, Rinehart & Winston. Unusually, the publisher is numbering the books, and wisely, for read in the order written they are remarkably linked through symbol, incident, and character, to the point that one sees them as a single, multi-volume novel, by which one may learn a great deal about what it means to be homosexual and male in modern America. The first, *Fadeout* ($2.95), is the conventional intricate tale as woven by a Ross Macdonald; by the second novel, *Death Claims* ($2.95), in which Brandstetter engages in a lover's quarrel as carefully realized as any between the sexes, the sense of style has established Hansen's independence of models. One must presume that *Troublemaker* and *The Man Everybody Was Afraid Of* are yet to come, and the fifth, *Skinflick* ($2.95), is still in print.

Then there is Robert Littell. I had not liked *The Defection of A. J. Lewinter*, though it had won an Edgar as the best first mystery novel of the year. I was wrong, for upon a rereading, prompted by the appearance now of *The Amateur* (Simon & Schuster; $12.95) and the simultaneous reprinting by Dell Books of *The Debriefing* ($2.75), originally published by Harper & Row in 1979, one can see the steady progression of a major talent. Littell has staked out the special ground of paranoia: Russian vs. American intelligence services, how literature hides the truth, and why Emily Dickinson tells us that we must tell the truth but tell it slant. Again, one hopes that Littell's three other books are soon to be reprinted, so that one may read him as he grew.

Finally, there is Richard North Patterson. His newest book, *The Outside Man* (Little, Brown; $11.95), is rich, complex, beautifully written. One might see it as Ross Macdonald transplanted to Alabama, though it is far more than that. It is about a marriage, family dynasties, a northerner in a rapidly changing south, and the Scottsboro Boys. It sent me back to Patterson's first book, *The Lasko Tangent*, which when published by Norton in 1979 won an Edgar. I had begun it, fallen into inattention, and left it behind on a lounge chair in the airport in Dubai, a gift to some passing oil millionaire. When I rediscovered it in paperback (Ballantine Books) in one of those musty shops that keep begrimed quasi-pornography cheek-by-buttock with treasured old wartime orange Penguins, I realized that Patterson had written a fine book, a genuine *story*—for so many of our mystery writers have lost touch with the necessity for narrative—about corruption in government that was fresh in its perceptions, even if the theme was a cliché by 1979. Patterson can construct a plot, does not gloss over inconsistencies with glib humor, and knows when not to have a man come through the door with a gun.

Robin Winks

Brief Review

Jacques-Louis David by Anita Brookner

(Harper & Row, Icon Editions; $35)

Anita Brookner is a detective of the buried soul, whether as a novelist (her first novel, *The Debut*, was recently published) or as a historian of art. With *Jacques-Louis David*, Brookner, a reader at the Courtauld Institute, provides a superb show of investigative work, a thorough and intelligent probing of the meaning of a man's art. Her book, the first monograph on the subject to appear in English, is a synthesis of ear-

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lier scholarship and digging and interpretations of Brookner's own. It is marred only by the garish quality of its scanty color reproductions, which are about as subtle as baseball cards.

David may have stuck in the mind's eye only as an arranger of neoclassical *tableaux* that linger like static, cinematic stills or illustrate a brief moment of human excess, as when the image of *Marat assassiné* (1793) adorned a theater poster for *Marat/Sade*. He also became Napoleon's favorite and official painter, putting his considerable talents at the service of imperial bombast and the self-glorification of the court. We have come to see the whole era through his eyes, or paintbrush—from Madame Récamier, that neurotic virgin, reclining on her couch, to Napoleon arrogantly astride a prancing horse. David helped create the Napoleonic period, contributing to the establishment of the Empire style and furnishing the cavernous interiors in his paintings with elements of the Greek, Roman, and Egyptian revival. At the end of his life he became a painter and poet of exile, condemned in his old age to bourgeois Brussels, where he painted the local citizens with trenchant insight. His career and Brookner's clear recounting of it are a guided tour through some of the most turbulent and complex years in French history.

The apparent motionlessness of David's art, the architectonic and sculptural appearance of even a fold of drapery, merely mask activities in the life that informed that art and, as Brookner emphasizes, the emotions that shaped his character. Dismissing a Freudian approach—along those lines and others—Brookner's statements are as refreshingly bald as one of David's stone arches. An insecure, high-strung, and melancholic personality with a scarred face, twisted mouth, and speech impediment, David poured his often violent feelings, professional paranoia, and imagination into his repressive art, striving to reconcile the moralistic Enlightment doctrine of perfectability with more spontaneous feelings. David drew his imaginative inspiration, Brookner demonstrates, from the stage, and his paintings were in large part well received because of his contemporaries' obsession with the theater. Brookner offers a solution to the famous and mysterious scenario of *The Oath of the Horatii* (1784), for instance, by tracing its puzzling meaning to the conventions of French tragedy, in which the central action takes place offstage. The

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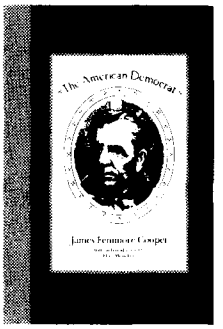

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Oath was a fantasy of strength for David; both he and the like-minded Diderot were actors manqués.

As a director, however, David turned out to be a great success, masterminding the pageants that propagandized the Republic and that resemble something out of Leni Riefenstahl or, closer to home, Abel Gance. David's other political involvements were distasteful and petty, but Brookner ascribes them less to conscious political savvy than to subconscious emotional disturbances and personal vendettas; a longstanding resentment against the Academy stimulated David to instigate its abolition.

So the political significations long applied to David's work by left and right alike are vehemently gainsaid. Brookner ultimately prefers to see David as a proto-Romantic, a spectacular naif, and an unhappy soul. His reinvigorated reputation doesn't depend merely on the post-modern taste for the neoclassical, the revival of revivals, but on his presence as a master. He is a fitting subject for such a spirited mind as Anita Brookner's.

Celia Betsky

Celia Betsky is associate editor of *Portfolio*, an art magazine.

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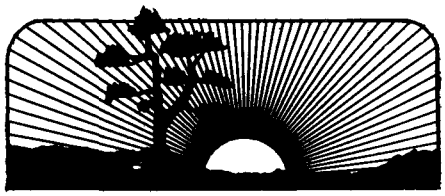

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Traveling Diarist

Freedoms

There is a wry little joke they tell in the Soviet Union that goes something like this: "How many Jews are there in the Soviet Union?" "About three million." "And if all the Jews were allowed to leave, how many of them would go?" "About 200 million." The figure is no doubt exaggerated, but it is certain that many citizens of the Soviet Union would be eager to avail themselves even of the limited opportunities for emigration now open to Jews and to some other smaller groups. It is ironic that although in general being a Jew in the Soviet Union is no great blessing, there is one respect in which Jews are regarded by their fellow citizens as an unfairly privileged and fortunate group. The privilege with which they are reproached is not money, not success, not power, not even influence. None of these are available to them. Their privilege is the chance to leave, and that is perhaps the greatest privilege that Soviet society can offer. It is a privilege the Jews have, by the way, in recognition of the fact that they have a homeland elsewhere, which is to say a country that will have them. There are many ways to measure a society's quality of life, to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of one political and economic order against another. But no test is as reliable as the refugee test. Both the United States and the Soviet Union have problems posed by migration: one has difficulty keeping people out, the other keeping people in. Even at the worst of times the US has been a powerful magnet to immigrants from all kinds of societies, including those that are virulently anti-American. A temporary lifting of immigration restrictions brought thousands of refugees from Cuba to Florida. It is difficult to conceive of any situation that would send refugees from Florida to Cuba. Even the militant Iranian students, who believe that America is Satan and that Khomeini is God's vice-regent on earth, disclose a curious reluctance to leave the American hell and return to the Iranian heaven. The refugees from Afghanistan, from Vietnam, from Cambodia, who risk poverty and privation, danger and death, rather than stay in their native lands under Communist rule, tell the same story. Lenin put it with his usual pith. Refugees are those who vote with their feet. In that sense, the Berlin Wall is yet another example of Communist voting procedures.

Another campaign for academic freedom is under way protesting restrictions the Israeli military has imposed on the Arab University of Bir Zeit on the occupied West Bank of Jordan. No Westerner would dispute the importance of intellectual freedom, one of the greatest achievements of Western civilization and one of the main causes of its greatness. Nor could any observer of the Middle East fail to see that the Israeli military have often been clumsy, high-handed, and arbitrary in their handling of the Arab university. Students, teachers, and sometimes even administrators have been detained and occasionally manhandled, and the university has been closed for weeks at a time. There are restrictions on teaching. Professors at Bir Zeit are allowed to question Israel's policies, but not its existence. They are allowed to demand its reduction, but not its destruction (funny people, these Jews, with their Talmudic, legalistic minds). By the highest standards of the Western world, Bir Zeit University is unfree. By the standards of the Communist and third worlds, including almost the whole of the Arab world, the University of Bir Zeit, with all its restrictions and military interferences, is a lush oasis of liberty of expression. Which brings me back to the campaign for academic freedom at Bir Zeit for which signatures are now being collected. One wonders if those who sign know what they are about. Some few of them are simply pro-Arab or anti-Jewish (the two overlap but do not necessarily coincide). For these, of course, the case of Bir Zeit is simply a useful stick with which to beat the Israelis. But an awkward question arises for the great majority who are neither pro-Arab nor anti-Israeli, let alone anti-Jewish. Why just Bir Zeit, which is far from being the worst case of academic oppression? What protests have they made about repression and censorship in the University of Warsaw? Or Kabul? Or in the many universities of the Arab world? The Spring 1981 issue of the *American Scholar* contains a remarkable account of life in a Syrian university, written by a returned Fulbrighter who spent a year teaching there. Samuel Pickering Jr. presents an appalling example which the defenders of academic freedom at Bir Zeit would do well to read. They might then be better placed to examine the real purposes of those who ask them to sign.

Within months of the ayatollah's return to Iran the Paris bookshops were full of new books about the revolution's leaders, including analyses and translations of their writings. At a time when official Washington was still questioning the authenticity or even the existence of Khomeini's book on Islamic government, a scholarly French translation, with introduction and notes, was already on sale in Paris. The only English translation is an unsatisfactory version distributed in duplicated typescript by a government agency and later picked up, since it was in the public domain, and published in a paperback edition. It is inferior to the French text in every way. Even more remarkable is the case of a widely read textbook on matters of ritual and other religious law by Khomeini, circulated in millions of copies in Iran. The French edition of this appeared at an early date. An English edition appears to have been translated not from the Persian original but from the French. A storm of indignant protest greeted its publication. The first line of defense, as with the book on Islamic government, was that it was not authentic; the second that it was distorted; the third, and most sincere, was that its publication tended to discredit the Iranian leader. "You could do the very same thing with the Talmud if you wanted to," someone said in my hearing. "A 40-page extract from that could have people rolling on the ground with laughter." Possibly, but there are some differences. The Talmud dates from the late Roman Empire; Khomeini is still alive. In any case I feel reasonably sure that if 40 pages of discreditable material could be extracted from it, this would have been done long since—by the Spanish Inquisition, the czarist secret police who invented the *Protocols of Zion*, the German Nazis, or any of their more recent imitators. The Paris bookshops also contain works by Bani Sadr and other prominent figures as well as monographs and studies on Shiism in its Iranian form, and on the conflicting ideologies within the revolutionary camp. Altogether the French reader has at his disposal an array of literature far wider and far better than anything available in America. Most of our official experts on the Middle East can read neither Arabic nor Persian. Is it too much to hope that some of them read French?

George Kane

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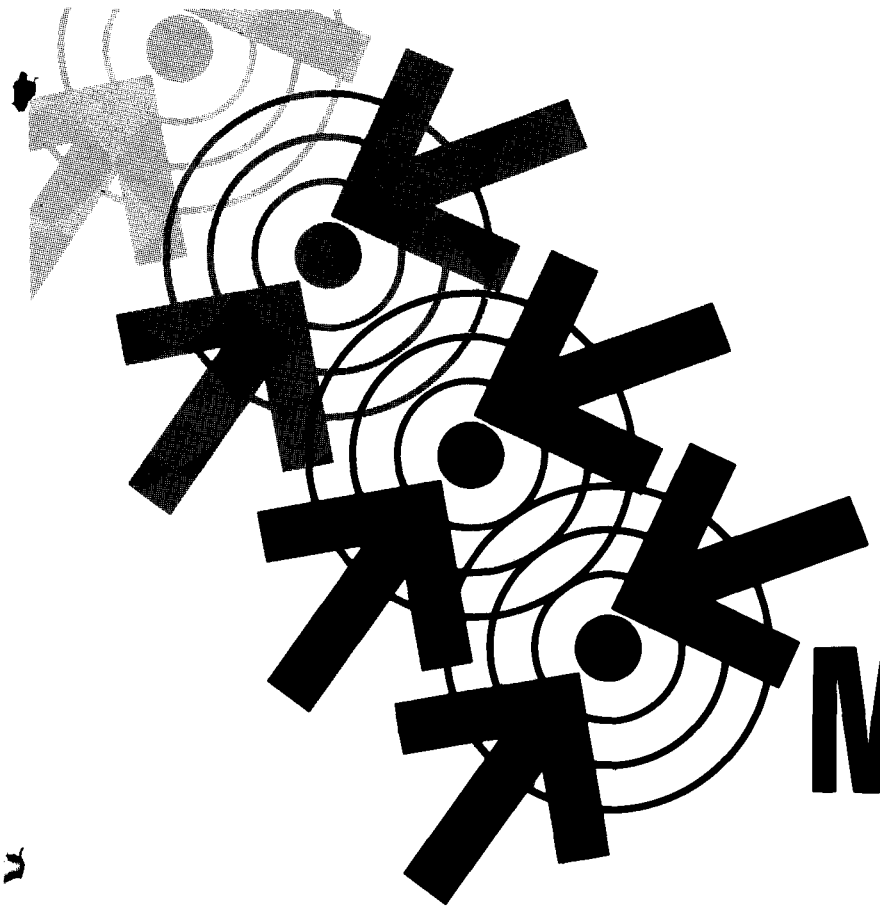

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